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LECTURES

ON THE

PROPHETICAL OFFICE OF THE CHURCH,

VIEWED RELATIVELY TO

ROMANISM

AND

POPULAR PROTESTANTISM.

BY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D.

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AND VICAR OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN'S, OXFORD.

They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in.—ISAIAH lviii. 12.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL;

& J. H. PARKER, OXFORD.

1837.

230.03 J
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LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

1396

TO

MARTIN JOSEPH ROUTH, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE,

WHO HAS BEEN RESERVED

TO REPORT TO A FORGETFUL GENERATION

WHAT WAS THE THEOLOGY OF THEIR FATHERS,

THIS VOLUME,

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH A RESPECTFUL SENSE

OF HIS EMINENT SERVICES TO THE CHURCH,

AND WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER

THAT WHAT HE WITNESSES TO OTHERS

MAY BE HIS OWN SUPPORT AND PROTECTION

IN THE DAY OF ACCOUNT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following volume has grown out of Parochial Lectures delivered on week-days; and, had its limits admitted, would have embraced the Sacerdotal as well as the Prophetical office of the Church. Great portions of a correspondence which the writer commenced with a learned and zealous member of the Gallican Church are also incorporated in it.

To prevent misconception as to the meaning of the Title-page, he would observe, that by Popular Protestantism he only wishes to designate that generalized idea of *religion*, now in repute, which merges all differences of faith and principle between Protestants as minor matters, as if the larger denominations among us agreed with us in essentials, and differed only in the accidents of form, ritual, government, or usage. Viewed *politically*, Protestantism is at this day the rallying point of all that is loyal and high-minded in the nation; but political con-

siderations do not enter into the scope of his work.

He has endeavoured in all important points of doctrine to guide himself by our standard divines, and, had space admitted, would have selected passages from their writings in evidence of it. This is almost a duty on the part of every author, who professes, not to strike out new theories, but to build up and fortify what has been committed to us. In the absence of such a collection of testimonies, he hopes it will not look like presumption to desire to make his own the following noble professions of the great Bramhall.

"No man can justly blame me for honouring my spiritual mother, the Church of England, in whose womb I was conceived, at whose breasts I was nourished, and in whose bosom I hope to die. Bees, by the instinct of nature, do love their hives, and birds their nests. But, God is my witness, that, according to my uttermost talent and poor understanding, I have endeavoured to set down the naked truth impartially, without either favour or prejudice, the two capital enemies of right judgment. The one of which, like a false mirror, doth represent things fairer and straighter than they are; the other like the tongue infected with choler makes the sweetest meats to taste bitter. My desire hath been to have Truth for my chiefest friend, and no enemy but error. If I have had any bias, it hath been desire of peace, which our

common Saviour left as a legacy to His Church, that I might live to see the re-union of Christendom, for which I shall always bow the knees of my heart to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not impossible but that this desire of unity may have produced some unwilling error of love, but certainly I am most free from the wilful love of error. In questions of an inferior nature, Christ regards a charitable intention much more than a right opinion.

"Howsoever it be, I submit myself and my poor endeavours, first to the judgment of the Catholic Ecumenical essential Church, which if some of late days have endeavoured to hiss out of the schools as a fancy, I cannot help it. From the beginning it was not so. And if I should mistake the right Catholic Church out of human frailty or ignorance, (which, for my part, I have no reason in the world to suspect, yet it is not impossible when the Romanists themselves are divided into five or six several opinions, what this Catholic Church, or what their Infallible Judge is), I do implicitly and in the preparation of my mind submit myself to the True Catholic Church, the Spouse of Christ, the Mother of the Saints, the Pillar of Truth. And seeing my adherence is firmer to the Infallible Rule of Faith, that is, the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Catholic Church, than to mine own private judgment or opinions; although I should unwittingly fall into an error, yet this

cordial submission is an implicit retractation thereof, and I am confident will be so accepted by the Father of Mercies, both from me and all others who seriously and sincerely do seek after peace and truth.

"Likewise I submit myself to the Representative Church, that is, a free General Council, or so General as can be procured; and until then to the Church of England, wherein I was baptized, or to a National English Synod. To the determination of all which, and each of these respectively, according to the distinct degree of their authority, I yield a *conformity* and *compliance*, or at the least and to the lowest of them, an *acquiescence*."—Works, p. 141.

Oriel College,
The Feast of St. Matthias.

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INTRODUCTION.

So much is said and argued just at this time on the subject of the Church, by those who use the word in different senses, and those who attach to it little distinct sense at all, that I have thought it might be useful, by way of promoting sound and consistent views concerning it, to consider it attentively in several of its bearings, and principally in its relation to Romanism, which possesses the most systematic theory concerning it. Unhappy is it that we should be obliged to discuss and defend what a Christian people were intended to enjoy, to appeal to their intellects instead of "stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance," to direct them towards articles of faith which should be their place of starting, and to treat as mere conclusions what in other ages have been assumed as first principles. Surely life is not long enough to prove every thing which may be made the subject of proof; and, though inquiry is left partly open in order to try our earnestness, yet it is in great mea-

sure, and in the most important points, superseded by Revelation,—which discloses things which reason could not reach, saves us the labour of using it when it might avail, and sanctions the *principle* of dispensing with it in all cases. Yet, in spite of this joint testimony of nature and grace, so it is, we seem at this day to consider discussion and controversy to be in themselves chief goods. We exult in what we think our indefeasible right and glorious privilege to choose and settle our religion for ourselves; and we stigmatize it as a bondage to be bid take for granted what the wise, good, and many have gone over and determined long before, or to submit to what Almighty God has revealed.

From this strange preference, however originating, of inquiry to belief, we, or our fathers before us, have contrived to make doubtful what really was certain. We have created difficulties in our path; we have gone out of our way to find ingenious objections to what was received, where none hitherto existed; as if forgetting that there is no truth so clear, no character so pure, no work of man so perfect, but it admits of criticism, and will become suspected directly it is accused. As might be expected, then, we have succeeded in our attempt; we have succeeded in raising clouds which effectually hide the sun from us, and we have nothing left but to grope our way by our reason, as we best can,—our necessary, because now our only guide. And as a traveller by night, calculating or

guessing his way over a morass or amid pit-falls, naturally trusts himself more than his companions, though not doubting their skilfulness and good will, and is too intent upon his own successive steps to hear and to follow them, so we, from anxiety if not from carelessness, have straggled each from his neighbour, and are all of us, or nearly so, in a fair way to lose our confidence, if not our hope. I say, we, or others for us, have asserted our right of debating every truth, however sacred, however protected from scrutiny hitherto; we have accounted that belief alone to be manly which commenced in doubt, that inquiry alone philosophical which assumed no first principles, that religion alone rational which we have created for ourselves. Loss of labour, division, and error have been the threefold gain of our self-will, as evidently visited in this world,—not to follow it into the next.

How we became committed to so ill-advised a course, by what unfortunate necessity, or under what overpowering temptation, it avails not here to inquire. But the consequences are undeniable; the innocent suffer by a state of things, which to the proud and carnal is an excuse for their indifference. The true voice of Revelation has been overpowered by the more clamorous traditions of men; and where there are rivals, examination is necessary, even where piety would fain have been rid of it. Thus, in relation to the particular subject which has led to these remarks, that some one meaning

was anciently attached to the word "Church," is certain from its occurring in the Creed; it is certain, for the same reason, that it bore upon some first principle in religion, else it would not have been there. It is certain moreover, from history, that its meaning was undisputed, whatever that meaning was; and it is as certain that there are interminable disputes and hopeless differences about its meaning now. Now is this a gain or a loss to the present age? At first sight one might think it a loss, so far as it goes, whatever be the cause of it; in the same sense in which the burning of a library is a loss, the destruction of a monument, the disappearance of an ancient record, or the death of an experimentalist or philosopher. Diminution from the stock of knowledge is commonly considered a loss in this day; yet strange to say, in the instance before us, it is thought far otherwise. The great mass of educated men are at once uneasy, impatient, and irritated, not simply incredulous, directly they are promised from any quarter some clear view of the original and apostolic doctrine, to them unknown, on any subject of religion. They bear to hear of researches into Christian Antiquity, if they are directed to prove its uncertainty and unprofitableness; they are intolerant and open-mouthed against them, if their object be to rescue not to destroy. They sanction a rule of philosophy which they practically refute every time they praise Newton or Cuvier. In truth, they can endure a

positive theory in other provinces of knowledge; but in theology it becomes practical. They perceive that there, what in itself is but an inquiry into questions of fact, tends to an encroachment upon what they think fit to consider their Christian liberty. They are reluctant to be confronted with evidence which will diminish their right of thinking as they please, rightly and wrongly; they are jealous of being forced to submit to one view of the subject, and to be unable at their pleasure to change; they consider comfort in religion to lie in all questions being open, and there being no call upon them to act. Thus they deliberately adopt that liberty which God gave His former people in wrath, "a liberty to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine[1]," the prerogative of being heretics or infidels.

It would be well if these men could keep their restless humours to themselves; but they unsettle all around them. They rob those of their birthright who would have hailed the privilege of being told the truth without their own personal risk in finding it; they force them against their nature upon relying on their reason, when they are content to be saved by faith. Such troublers of the Christian community would in a healthy state of things be silenced or put out of it, as disturbers of the king's peace are restrained in civil matters; but our times,

[1] Jer. xxxiv. 17.

from whatever cause, being times of confusion, we are reduced to the use of argument and disputation, just as we think it lawful to carry arms and barricade our houses during national disorders.

Let this be my excuse for discussing rather than teaching what was meant to be simply an article of faith. We travel by night: the teaching of the Apostles concerning it, which once, like the pillar in the wilderness, was with the children of God from age to age continually, is withdrawn; and we are, so far, left to make the best of our way to the promised land by our natural resources.

In the following Lectures, then, it is attempted, in the measure which such a mode of writing allows, to build up what man has pulled down, in some of the questions connected with the Church; and that, by means of the stores of Divine truth bequeathed to us in the works of our standard Divines.

The immediate reason for discussing the subject is this: In the present day, such incidental notice of it, as Christian teachers are led to take in the course of their pastoral instructions, is sure to be charged with what is commonly called "Popery;" and for this reason,—that Romanists having ever insisted upon it, and Protestants neglected it, to speak of it at all, though it is mentioned in the Creed, is thought to savour of Romanism. Those then who feel its importance, and yet are not Romanists, are bound on several accounts to show

why they are not Romanists, and how they differ from them. They are bound to do so, in order to remove the prejudice with which an article of the Creed is at present encompassed; and on the other hand to prevent those who have right but vague ideas concerning it, from deviating into Romanism because no other system is provided for them. Till they do more than they have hitherto done, of course they hazard, though without any fault of theirs, a deviation on the part of their hearers into Romanism on the one hand, a reaction into mere Protestantism on the other.

From the circumstances then of the moment, the following Lectures are chiefly engaged in examining and exposing certain tenets of Romanism. But this happens for another reason. After all, the main object in a discussion should be, not to refute error merely, but to establish truth. What Christians especially need and have a right to require, is a positive doctrine on such subjects as come under notice. They have a demand on their teachers for the meaning of the article of the Apostles' Creed, which binds them to faith in "the Holy Catholic Church." It is a poor answer to this inquiry, merely to enter into an attack upon Romanism, and to show that it contains an exaggerated and erroneous view of the doctrine. Erroneous or not, a view it certainly does contain; and that religion which attempts a view, though imperfect or extreme, does more than those which do not attempt it at all. If we deny

that Romanists speak the truth, we are bound in very shame to commit ourselves to the risk of a theory, unless we would fight with them at an unfair advantage; and in charity to our own people, lest we tempt them to error, while we refuse to give them what is better instead of it. But at the same time, it stands to reason, that to do this effectually we must proceed on the plan of attacking Romanism, as the most convenient way of showing what our own views are. It has pre-occupied the ground, and we cannot erect our own structure without partly breaking down, partly using what we find upon it. And thus for a second reason, the following Lectures, as far as in their very form goes, are chiefly written against Romanism, though their main object is not controversy but edification.

Their main object is to furnish an approximation in one or two points towards a correct theory of the duties and office of the Church Catholic. Popular Protestantism does not attempt it at all; it abandons the subject altogether: Romanism supplies a doctrine, but, as we conceive, an untrue one. The question is, what is that sound and just exposition of this Article of Faith, which holds together, or is consistent in theory, and is justified by the history of the dispensation, which is neither Protestant nor Roman, but proceeds according to that *Via Media*, which, as in other things so here, is the appropriate path for sons of the English Church to walk in? What is the nearest approximation to

that primitive truth which Ignatius and Polycarp enjoyed, and which the nineteenth century has lost?

This is the problem which demands serious consideration at this day, and some detached portions of which will be considered in the following Lectures. Leaving to others questions directly political and ecclesiastical, I propose to direct attention to some of those connected with the pastoral office of the Church.

It is obvious to insist on certain supposed disadvantages of considering such a subject at this moment. In replying to this objection, which I shall now attempt to do, an opportunity will be given me to explain more at length the object contemplated.

It is urged, then, by conscientious and sensible men, that we have hitherto done sufficiently well without any theory on the subject, and therefore do not need it now or in prospect; that certain notions, in whatever degree abstractedly correct, have become venerable and beneficial by long usage, and ought not now to be disturbed; that the nature and functions of the Church have been long settled in this country by law and by historical precedents, and that it is our duty to take what we find, and use it for the best; that to discuss the question of the Church, whatever precautions be taken, necessarily involves the unsettling of received opinions; that though the views which may be put forward be in themselves innocent or true, yet

under the circumstances they will lead to Romanism, if only because the mind when once set in motion in any direction finds it difficult to stop, and because the article of the Church has been accidentally the badge and index of that system; that the discussions proposed are singularly unseasonable at this day, when our Church requires support against her enemies, and must be defended by practical measures, not by speculations upon her nature and historical pretensions, speculations unprofitable in themselves, and in fact only adding to our existing differences, and raising fresh parties and interests in our already distracted communion, speculations which have never been anything but speculations, never were realized in any age of the Church; lastly, that the pretended *Via Media* is but an eclectic system, dangerous to the religious temper of those who advocate it, as leading to arrogance and self-sufficiency in judging of sacred subjects. This is pretty nearly what may be said.

Now it is obvious that these objections prove too much. If they prove any thing, they go to show that the article of the Holy Church Catholic should not be discussed at all, not even as a point of faith; but that in its most essential respects, as well as in its bearings and consequences, it may be determined and interpreted by the law of the land. This consideration in itself would be enough to show, that there was some fallacy in them some-

where, even if we could not detect it. However, let us consider some of them in detail.

One of the most weighty of these objections at first sight, is the danger of unsettling things established, and raising questions, which, whatever may be their intrinsic worth, are novel and exciting at the present day. When, for instance, the office of Holy Scripture, or the judicial power of the Church, or the fundamentals of faith, or the legitimate power of the Roman see, or the principles of Protestantism are discussed, it is natural to object, that since the Revolution of 1688 they have been practically cut short, and definitely settled by civil acts and precedents. It may be urged, that the absolute subjection of the bishops, as bishops, to the crown is determined by the deprivations of 1689: the Church's forfeiture of her synodical rights by the final measure of 1717; the essential agreement of Presbyterianism with Episcopacy by the union with Scotland in 1706-7; and our incorporation with dissenters, on the common ground of Protestantism, by the proceedings of the Revolution itself. It may be argued that these measures were but the appropriate carrying out of the acts of the Reformation; that King William and his party did but complete what King Henry began; and that we are born Protestants, and though free to change our religion and to profess a change, yet, till we do so, Protestants, as other Protestants, we certainly are, though we happen to retain the episcopal form; that our

Church has thriven upon this foundation in wealth, station, and usefulness; that being a part of the constitution, it cannot be altered without touching the constitution itself; and, consequently, that all discussions are either very serious or very idle.

To all this I answer, that the constitution has been altered, and not by us; and the mere question is, whether the constitution being altered, and the Church in consequence, which is part of it, being exposed to danger in her various functions, we may allow those who have brought her into danger, to apply what they consider suitable remedies, without claiming a voice in the matter ourselves. Are questions bearing more or less upon the education of our members, the extension of our communion, and its relations to Protestant bodies, to be decided without us? Are precedents to be created while we sit by, which afterwards may be assumed as our acknowledged principles? It is our own concern; and it is not strange if we think it will be better looked after by ourselves, than by our enemies or by mere politicians. We are driven by the pressure of circumstances to contemplate our own position, and to fall back upon first principles; nor can an age, which prides itself on its powers of scrutiny and research, be surprised if we do in self-defence what it does in wantonness and pride. We accepted the principles of 1688 as the Church's basis, while they remained, because we had received them: they have been surrendered. If we now

put forward a theory instead of them, all that can be said against us is, that we are not so much attached to them on their own account, as to consent, that persons, still more ignorant of our divinely framed system than the statesmen of that era, should attempt, in some similar or worse form, to revive them. In truth, we have had enough, if we would be wise, of mere political religion; which, like a broken reed, has pierced through the hand that leaned upon it. While, and in proportion as we are bound to it, it is our duty to submit, as the duties of the Jews lay in submitting to Nebuchadnezzar, as Jeremiah instructed them. We will not side with a reckless and destructive party, even in undoing our own chains, where there is no strong call of duty to oblige us; nay, we will wear them, not only contentedly but loyally; we will be zealous bondsmen, while the state honours us in our captivity. It has been God's merciful pleasure, as of old time, to make even those who led us away captive to pity us. Those who might have been tyrants over us, have piously nursed the Church, and liberated her, as far as was expedient, in the spirit of him who "builded the city, and let go the captives not for price nor reward[1]." And while the powers of this world so dealt with us, who would not have actively co-operated with them, from love as well as from duty? And thus it was that the

[1] Is. xlv. 13.

most deeply learned, and most generous minded of our divines thought no higher privilege could befal them than to minister at the throne of a prince like our first Charles, who justified their confidence by dying for the Church a martyr's death. And I suppose, in similar circumstances, any one of those who afterwards became non-jurors, or of such persons at this day as have the most settled belief in the spiritual powers of the Church, would have thought himself unworthy to be her son, had he not fallen in with a system which he had received and found so well administered, whatever faults might exist in its theory. This is the view to be taken of the conduct of our Church in the seventeenth century, which we only do not imitate now, because we are not allowed to do so, because our place of service and our honourable function about the throne are denied us. And, as we should act as our predecessors were we in their times, so, as we think, they too would act as we do in ours. They, doubtless, at a time when our enemies are allowed to legislate upon our concerns, and to dispose of the highest offices in the Church, would feel that there were objects dearer to them than the welfare of the state, duties even holier than obedience to civil governors, and would act accordingly. It is our lot to see the result of an experiment which in their days was but in process, that of surrendering the Church into the hands of the state. It has been tried and failed; we have trusted the world, and it has taken

advantage of us. While the event was doubtful, it was the duty of her rulers to make the best of things as they found them: now that it is over, though we must undergo the evil, we are surely not bound to conceal it.

These reflections would serve to justify inquiries far beyond the scope of the following Lectures, such, I mean, as bear upon our political and ecclesiastical state; whereas those which will here come into consideration have more reference to religious teaching than to action,—to the Church's influence on her members, one by one, rather than to her right of moving them as a whole. But the distinct portions of the general subject so affect each other, that such points as Church authority, Tradition, the Rule of Faith, and the like, cannot be treated without seeming to entrench upon political principles, consecrated by the associations of the Revolution. It has ever required an apology, since that event, to speak the language of our divines before it; and such an apology is now found in the circumstances of the day, in which all notions, moral and religious, are so unsettled, that every positive truth must be a gain.

But, in answer to a portion of the foregoing remarks, it is not uncommon to urge what at first sight seems to be a paradox; that our enemies, or strangers, or at least persons unacquainted with the principles of the Church, are better fitted than her proper guardians and ministers to consult for her welfare; that they are better friends to us than

ourselves, and in a manner often defend us against ourselves; and the saying of a great and religious author is quoted against us, that "clergymen understand the least and take the worst measure of human affairs of all mankind that can write and read[1]." And so they certainly do, if their end in view be that which secular politicians imagine. If their end be the temporal aggrandisement of the Church, no greater or more intolerable visitation could befal us than to be subjected to such counsellors as Archbishop Laud. But, perchance the objects we have in view are as hidden from the man of the world, whether statesman, philosopher, or courtier, as heaven itself from his bodily eyes; and perchance those measures which are most demonstrably headstrong and insane, if directed towards a political end, may be most judicious and successful in a religious point of view. It is an acknowledged principle, that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church; and if death itself may be a victory, so in like manner may worldly loss and trouble, however severe and accumulated.

I am aware that professions of this nature increase rather than diminish to men of the world their distaste for the conduct they are meant to explain. The ends which are alleged to account for the conduct of religious men, remove the charge of imprudence only to attach to them the more

[1] Clarendon's Life, vol. i. p. 74.

odious imputation of fanaticism and its kindred qualities. Pilate's feeling when he asked "What is truth?" is a type of the disgust felt by men of the world at the avowal of Christian faith and zeal. To profess to act towards objects which to them are as much a theory and a dream as the scenes of some fairy tale, angers them by what they consider its utter absurdity and folly. "Miserable men!" said the heathen magistrate on witnessing the determination of the martyrs of Christ, "if ye will die, cannot you find precipices or halters!"[1] Nor is this feeling confined to infidels or scorners; men of seriousness and good intentions, and it is especially to the purpose to observe this, feel the same annoyance and impatience at certain parts of that Ancient Religion, of which the doctrine of the Church is the centre, which profligate men manifest towards moral and religious motives altogether. To take an instance which will be understood by most men. Should a man, rightly or wrongly, for that is not the question, profess to regulate his conduct under the notion that he is seen by invisible spectators, that he and all Christians have upon them the eyes of Angels, especially when in Church; should he, when speaking on some serious subject, exhort his friends as in their presence, nay, bid them attend to the propriety of their apparel in divine worship because of them, would he not at first be

[1] Tertull. ad Scap. 5.

thought to speak poetically, and so excused? next, when he was frequent in expressing such a sentiment, would he not become tiresome and unwelcome? and when he was understood to speak literally, would not his views to a certainty be met with grave, cold, contemptuous, or impatient looks, as idle, strained, and unnatural? Now this is just the reception which secular politicians give to religious objects altogether; and my drift in noticing it is this,—to impress on those who regard with disgust the range of doctrines connected with the Church, that it does not at all prove that those doctrines are strained and are uninfluential, because *they* are disgusted, unless indeed the offence which the infidel takes at the doctrine of the Cross be an argument that it also is really foolishness. These doctrines may be untrue and unreasonable certainly; but if the surprise of those who first hear them and have never acted on them, be a proof that they are so, more will follow than would be admitted by any of us; for surely, no disagreeable feeling, which they can experience, equals the scorn with which irreligious men hear of the blessed doctrine that God has become man, no surprise of theirs can equal the amazement and derision with which the pagans witnessed a saint contending even unto bonds and death, for what they considered a matter of opinion.

It does not follow, then, that doctrines are uninfluential, when plainly and boldly put forward,

because they offend the prejudices of the age at first hearing. Had this been true, Christianity itself ought not to have succeeded; and it cannot be imagined that the respectable and serious men of this day who express concern at what they consider the exaggerated tone of certain writers on the subject of the Church, are more startled and offended than the outcasts to whom the Apostles preached in the beginning. Truth has the gift of overcoming the human heart, whether by persuasion or by compulsion, whether by inward acceptance or by external constraint; and if what we preach be truth, it must be natural, it must be seasonable, it must be popular, it will make itself popular. It will find its own. As time goes on, and its sway extends, those who thought its voice strange and harsh at first, will wonder how they could ever so have deemed of sounds so musical and thrilling.

The objection, however, which has led to these remarks, takes another and more reasonable form in the minds of practical men, which shall now be noticed. A religious principle or idea, however true, before it is realized in a substantive form, is but a theory; and since many theories are not more than theories, and do not admit of being carried into effect, it is exposed to the suspicion of being one of these, and of having no existence out of books. The proof of reality in a doctrine is its holding together when actually attempted. Practical men are naturally prejudiced against what is new, on this

ground if on no other, that it has not had the opportunity of satisfying this test. Christianity would appear at first a mere literature, or philosophy, or mysticism, like the Pythagorean rule or Phrygian worship; nor till it was tried, could the coherence of its parts be ascertained. Now the class of doctrines in question as yet labours under the same difficulty. Indeed, they are in one sense as entirely new as Christianity when first preached; for though they profess merely to be that foundation on which it originally spread, yet as far as they represent a *Via Media*, that is, are related to extremes which did not then exist, and do exist now, they appear unreal, for a double reason, having no exact counterpart in early times, and being superseded now by actually existing systems. Protestantism and Popery are real religions; no one can doubt about them; they have furnished the mould in which nations have been cast: but the *Via Media* has never existed except on paper, it has never been reduced to practice; it is known, not positively but negatively, in its differences from the rival creeds, not in its own properties; and can only be described as a third system, neither the one nor the other, partly both, cutting between them, and, as if with a critical fastidiousness, trifling with them both, and boasting to be nearer Antiquity than either. What is this but to fancy a road over mountains and rivers, which has never been cut? When we profess our *Via Media*, as the very truth of the

Apostles, we seem to be mere antiquarians or pedants, amusing ourselves with illusions or learned subtilties, and unable to grapple with things as they are. We tender no proof to show that our view is not self-contradictory, and if set in motion, would not fall to pieces, or start off in different directions at once. Learned divines, it may be urged, may have propounded it, as they have; controversialists may have used it to advantage when supported by the civil sword against Papists or Puritans; but, whatever its merits; still, when left to itself, to use a familiar term, it may not "work." And the very circumstance that it has been propounded for centuries by great names, and not yet reduced to practice, may be alleged as an additional presumption against its feasibility. To take for instance the subject of Private Judgment; our theory here is neither Protestant nor Roman; and has never been realized. Our opponents ask, what is it? Is it more than a set of words and phrases, of exceptions and limitations made for each successive emergency, of principles which contradict each other?

It cannot be denied there is force in these considerations; it still remains to be tried whether what is called Anglicanism, the religion of Andrews, Laud, Hammond, Butler, and Wilson is capable of being professed, acted on, and maintained on a large sphere of action and through a sufficient period, or whether it be a mere modification either

of Romanism or of popular Protestantism, according as we view it. It may be argued that whether the primitive Church agreed more with Rome or with Protestants, and though it agreed with neither of them exactly, yet that one or the other, whichever it is, is the nearest approximation to the ancient model which our changed circumstances admit; that either this or that is the modern representative of primitive principles; that any professed third theory, however plausible, must necessarily be composed of discordant elements, and when attempted must necessarily run into Romanism or Protestantism, according to the nearness of the attracting bodies, and the varying sympathies of the body attracted, and its independence of those portions of itself which interfere with the stronger attraction. It may be argued that the Church of England, as established by law, and existing in fact, has never represented a certain doctrine or been the development of a principle, that it has been but a name, or a department of the state, or a political party, in which religious opinion was an accident, and therefore has been various. In consequence, it has been but the theatre of contending religionists, that is, of Papists and Latitudinarians, softened externally, or modified into inconsistency by their birth and education, or restrained by their interests and their religious engagements. Now all this is very plausible, and is to the point, as far as this, that there certainly is a call upon us to exhibit our prin-

ciples in action; and until we can produce diocese, or place of education, or populous town, or colonial department, or the like, administered on our distinctive principles, as the diocese of Sodor and Man in the days of Bishop Wilson, doubtless we have not as much to urge in our behalf as we might have.

This, however, may be said in favour of the independence and reality of our view of religion, even under past and present circumstances, that, whereas there have ever been three principal parties in the Church of England, the Apostolical, the Latitudinarian, and the Puritan, the two latter have been shown to be but modifications of Socinianism and Calvinism by their respective histories when allowed to act freely, whereas the first, when it had the opportunity of running into Romanism, did not coalesce with it; which certainly argues some real differences in it from that system with which it is popularly confounded. The Puritan portion of the Church was set at liberty, as is well known, during the national troubles of the seventeenth century; and in no long time prostrated the Episcopate, abolished the ritual, and proved itself by its actions, if proof was necessary, essentially Calvinistic. The principle of Latitude was allowed considerable range between the times of Charles II. and George II. and even under the pressure of the Thirty-nine Articles, possessed vigour enough to develope such indications of its real tendency, as Hoadly and his

school supply. The Apostolical portion of the Church, whether patronised by the court, or wandering in exile, or cast out of their native communion by political events, evinced one and the same feeling of hostility against Rome. Its history at the era of the Revolution is especially remarkable. Ken, Collier, and the rest had every adventitious motive which resentment or interest could supply for joining the Romanists; nor can any reason be given why they did not move on the one side, as Puritans and Latitudinarians had moved on the other, except that their Creed had in it an independence and distinctness which was wanting in the religious views of their opponents. If nothing more has accrued to us from the treatment which these excellent men endured, this at least has providentially resulted, that we are thereby furnished with irrefragable testimony to the essential difference between the Roman and Anglican systems.

But if this be so, if the English Church has the mission, hitherto unfulfilled, of representing a theology, Catholic but not Roman, here is an especial reason why her members should be on the watch for opportunities of bringing out and carrying into effect its distinctive character. Such opportunities perhaps have before now occurred in our history, and have been neglected, and may never return; but, at least, the present unsettled state of religious opinion among us furnishes an opening which may be providentially intended, and which it is a duty

to use. And there are other circumstances favourable to the preaching of the pure Anglican doctrine. In a former age, the tendency of mere Protestantism had not discovered itself with the fearful clearness which has attended its later history. English divines were tender of the other branches of the Reformation, and did not despair of their return to the entire Catholic truth. Before Germany had become rationalistic, and Geneva Socinian, Romanism might be considered as the most dangerous corruption of the gospel; and this might be a call upon members of our Church to merge their differences with foreign Protestantism and Dissent at home, as if in the presence of a common enemy. But at this day, when the connexion of Protestantism with infidelity is so evident, what claim has the former upon our sympathy? and to what theology can the serious Protestant, dissatisfied with his system, betake himself but to Romanism, unless we display our characteristic principles, and show him that he may be Catholic and Apostolic, yet not Roman? Such, as is well known, was the service actually rendered by our Church to the learned German divine, Grabe, at the end of the seventeenth century, who, feeling the defects of Lutheranism, even before it had lapsed, was contemplating a reconciliation with Rome, when, finding that England offered what to a disciple of Ignatius and Cyprian were easier terms, he conformed to her creed, and settled and died in this country.

Again: though it is not likely that Romanism should ever again become formidable in England; yet it may be in a position to make its voice heard, and in proportion as it is able to do so, the *Via Media* will do important service of the following kind. In the controversy which will ensue, Rome will not fail to preach far and wide the tenet which it never conceals, that there is no salvation external to its own communion. On the other hand, Protestantism, as it exists, will not be behind hand in consigning to eternal ruin all who are adherents of Roman doctrine. What a prospect is this! two widely spread and powerful parties dealing forth solemn anathemas upon each other, in the name of the Lord! Indifference and scepticism must be, in such a case, the ordinary refuge of men of mild and peaceable minds, who revolt from such presumption, and are deficient in clear views of the truth. I cannot well exaggerate the misery of such a state of things. Here the English theology would come in with its characteristic calmness and caution, clear and decided in its view, giving no encouragement to lukewarmness and liberalism, but withholding all absolute anathemas on errors of opinion, except where the primitive Church sanctions the use of them.

Here we are reminded of one more objection which may be made to the discussion of such subjects as those contained in the following Lectures; and with a brief notice of it I will conclude. It

may appear, then, that there is that in the notion of inquiries into a doctrine but partly settled and received, and in the very name of a *Via Media*, adapted to foster a self-sufficient and sceptical spirit. The essence of revealed religion is the submission of the reason and heart to a positive system, the acquiescence in doctrines which cannot be proved or explained. A realized system is presupposed as the primary essential, from the nature of the case. When, then, we begin by saying that the English doctrine is not embodied in any substantive form, or publicly recognized in its details, we seem to reduce religion to a mere literature, to make reason the judge of it, and to confess it to be a matter of opinion. And when, in addition to this, we describe it as combining various portions of other systems, what is this, it may be asked, but to sanction an eclectic principle, which of all others is the most arrogant and profane? When men choose or reject from religious systems what they please, they furnish melancholy evidence of their want of earnestness; and when they put themselves above existing systems, as if these were suited only to the multitude or to bigoted partizans, they are supercilious and proud; and when they think they may create what they are to worship, their devotion cannot possess any high degree of reverence and godly fear. Surely, then, it may be said, such theorizing on religious subjects is but to indulge that undue use of reason, which was so pointedly

condemned in the commencement of these remarks.

I would not willingly under-value the force of this representation. It might be said, however, in reply, that at the worst the evil specified would cease in proportion as we were able to realize that system which is wanting. But after all the true answer to the objection is simply this, that though Anglicanism is not practically reduced to system in its fulness, it does exist, in all its parts, in the writings of our divines, and in good measure is in actual operation, though with varying degrees of consistency and completeness in different places. There is no room for eclecticism in any elementary matter. No member of the English Church allows himself to build on any other doctrine than that found in our book of Common Prayer. That formulary contains the elements of our theology; and herein lies the practical exercise of our faith, which all true religion exacts. We surrender ourselves in obedience to it: we act upon it: we obey it ever in points of detail where there is room for diversity of opinion. The Thirty-nine Articles furnish a second trial of our humility and self-restraint. Again, we never forget that, reserving our fidelity to the Creed, we are bound to defer to Episcopal authority. Here then are trials of principle on starting; so much is already settled, and demands our assent, not our criticism. What remains to be done, and comes into discussion, are

secondary questions, such as these, How best to carry out the rubrics of the Prayer-book? how to apply its services in particular cases? how to regard our canons of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? how to reconcile the various portions of the ritual? how to defend certain formularies, or how to explain others? Another series of unsettled difficulties arises out of the question of education and teaching: What are the records, what the rule of faith? what the authority of the Church? how much is left to Private Judgment? what are the objects and best mode of religious training? and the like. The subject of Church government opens another field of inquiries, which are more or less unanswered, as regards their practical perception, by our clergy. The Thirty-nine Articles supply another. And in all these topics we are not left to ourselves to determine as we please, but have the guidance of our standard writers, and are bound to consult them, nay, when they agree, to follow them; but when they differ, to adjust or to choose between their opinions.

Enough has now been said by way of explaining the object of the following Lectures. It is proposed to offer helps towards the formation of a recognized Anglican theology in one of its departments. The present state of our divinity is as follows: the most vigorous, the clearest, the most fertile minds, have through God's mercy been employed in the service of our Church; minds too as

reverential and holy, and as fully imbued with Ancient Truth, and as well versed in the writings of the Fathers, as they were intellectually gifted. This is God's great mercy indeed, for which we must ever be thankful. Primitive doctrine has been explored for us in every direction, and the original principles of the gospel and the Church patiently and successfully brought to light. But one thing is still wanting: our champions and teachers have lived in stormy times; political and other influences have acted upon them variously in their day, and have since obstructed a careful consolidation of their judgments. We have a vast inheritance, but no inventory of our treasures. All is given us in profusion; it remains for us to catalogue, sort, distribute, select, harmonize, and complete. We have more than we know how to use; stores of learning, but little that is precise and serviceable; Catholic truth and individual opinion, first principles and the guesses of genius, all mingled in the same works, and requiring to be discriminated. We meet with truths over-stated or misdirected, matters of detail variously taken, facts incompletely proved or applied, and rules inconsistently urged or discordantly interpreted. Such indeed is the state of every deep philosophy in its first stages, and therefore of theological knowledge. What we need at present for our Church's well-being, is not invention, nor originality, nor sagacity, nor even learning in our divines, at least in the

first place, though all these gifts of God are in a measure needed, and never can be unseasonable when used religiously, but we need peculiarly a sound judgment, patient thought, discrimination, a comprehensive mind, an abstinence from all private fancies and caprices and personal tastes,—in a word, divine wisdom. For this excellent endowment, let us, in behalf of ourselves and brethren, earnestly and continually pray. Let us pray, that He who has begun the work for our Holy Mother with a divine exuberance, will finish it as with a refiner's fire and in the perfectness of truth.

Merely to have directed attention to the present needs of our Church, would be a sufficient object for writing the following pages. We require a recognized theology, and if the present work, instead of being what it is meant to be, a first approximation to the required solution in one department of a complicated problem, contains after all but a series of illustrations demonstrating our need, and supplying hints for its removal, such a result, it is evident, will be quite a sufficient return for whatever anxiety it has cost the writer to have employed his own judgment on so serious a subject. And, though in all greater matters of theology there is no room for error, so prominent and concordant is the witness of our great Masters in their behalf, yet he is conscious that in minor points, whether in questions of fact or of judgment, there is room

for difference or error of opinion ; and while he has given his best endeavours to be accurate, he shall not be ashamed to own a mistake, nor reluctant to bear the just blame of it.

LECTURE I.

THE NATURE AND GROUND OF ROMAN AND PROTESTANT ERRORS.

All Protestant sects of the present day may be said to agree with us and differ from the Romanists, in considering the Bible as the only standard of appeal in doctrinal inquiries. They differ indeed from each other as well as from us in the matter of their belief; but they one and all accept the written word of God as the supreme and sole arbiter of their differences. This makes their contest with each other and us more simple; I do not say shorter,—on the contrary, they have been engaged in it almost three hundred years, as many of them, that is, as are so ancient, and there are no symptoms of its ending,—but it makes the controversy less laborious. It narrows the ground of it; it levels it to the intelligence of all ranks of men; it gives the multitude a right to take part in it; it encourages all men, learned and unlearned, religious and irreligious, to have an opinion in it, and to turn controversialists.

The Bible is a small book; any one may possess it; and every one, unless he be very humble, will think he is able to understand it. And therefore, I say, controversy is *easier* among Protestants, because any one can controvert; easier, but not shorter; because, though all sects agree together as to the *standard* of faith, viz. the Bible, yet no two agree as to the *interpreter* of the Bible, but each person makes himself the interpreter, so that what seemed at first sight a means of peace, turns out to be a chief occasion or cause of discord. It is a great point to come to issue with an opponent; that is, to discover some position which oneself affirms and the other denies, and on which the decision of the controversy will turn. It is like two armies meeting, and settling their quarrel in a pitched battle, instead of wandering to and fro, each by itself, and inflicting injury and gaining advantages where no one resists it. Now the Bible is this common ground among Protestants, and seems to have been originally assumed in no small degree from a notion of its simplicity in argument. But, if this was the case in any quarter, the hope has been frustrated by this difficulty,—the Bible is not so written as to force its meaning upon the reader; no two Protestant sects can agree together whose interpretation of the Bible is to be received; and under such circumstances each naturally prefers his own;—his own "interpretation," his own "doctrine," his own "tongue," his own "revelation." Accordingly, acute

men among them see that the very elementary notion which they have adopted, of the Bible without note or comment being the sole authoritative judge in controversies of faith, is a self-destructive principle, and practically involves the conclusion, that dispute is altogether hopeless and useless, and even absurd. After whatever misgivings or reluctance, they seem to allow, or to be in the way to allow, that truth is but matter of opinion; that that is truth to each which each thinks to be truth, provided he sincerely and really thinks it; that the divinity of the Bible itself is the only thing that need be believed, and that its meaning varies with the individuals who receive it; that it has no one meaning to be ascertained as a matter of fact, but that it may mean anything because it is said to mean so many things; and hence that our wisdom and our duty lie in discarding all notions of the importance of any particular set of opinions, any doctrines, or any creed, each man having a right to his own, and in living together peaceably with men of all persuasions, whatever our private judgments and leanings may be. I do not say that these conclusions need follow by logical necessity from the principle from which I have deduced them; but that practically they will follow in the long run, and actually have followed where there were no counteracting causes in operation. Nor do I allow that they will follow at all in our own case, though we agree with Protestant sects in making

Scripture the document of ultimate appeal in matters of faith. For though we consider Scripture a sufficient, we do not consider it our sole informant in divine truths. We have another source of information in reserve, as I shall presently show. We agree with the sectaries around us so far as this, to be ready to take their ground, which Romanists cannot and will not do, to believe that our creed can be proved entirely, and to be willing to prove it solely from the Bible. We are willing to argue with them with texts; they may feel the force of these or not; we may convince them or not, but we convince ourselves; we do confute them with the weapon they have assumed as their own, and we know we do; and we are able to convince and convert others by means of it, though not them; which proves its cogency in our use of it. We have joined issue with them, and done all that can be done. The case is not as if we were searching after some unknown and indefinite ground of proof which we were told they had, but were uncertain about, and could not ascertain or circumscribe. We know their greatest strength, and we discover it to be weakness. They have no argument behind to fall back upon; we have examined and decided against their cause.

And they themselves, as I have observed, have decided against it too; their adoption of the latitudinarian notion that one creed is as good as another, is an evidence of it. We on the contrary

should not be perplexed at hearing their interpretations of Scripture, were they ever so positive and peremptory in maintaining them. Nay, we should not waver even if they succeeded in weakening some of our proofs, taking the text of Scripture by itself, both as considering that in matters of conduct evidence is not destroyed by being impaired, and because we rely on Antiquity to strengthen such intimations of doctrine as are but faintly, though really, given in Scripture.

Protestant denominations, I have said, one and all profess to appeal to Scripture, whether they be called Independents, or Baptists, or Unitarians, or Presbyterians, or Wesleyans, or by any other title. But the case is different as regards Romanists; they do not appeal to Scripture unconditionally; they are not willing to stand or fall by mere arguments from Scripture; and therefore, if we take Scripture as our ground of proof in our controversies with them, we have not yet joined issue with them. Not that they reject Scripture, it would be very unjust to say so; they would shrink from doing so, or being thought to do so; and perhaps they adhere to Scripture as closely as some of those Protestant bodies who profess to be guided by nothing else; but, though they admit Scripture to be the word of God, they conceive that it is not the whole word of God, they openly avow that they regulate their faith by something else besides Scripture, by the existing Traditions of the Church. They main-

tain that the system of doctrine which they hold came to them from the Apostles as truly and certainly as their inspired writings; so that, even if those writings had been lost, the world would still have had the blessings of a Revelation. Now, they must be clearly understood, if they are to be soundly refuted. We hear it said, that they go by Tradition, and we fancy in consequence that there are a certain definite number of statements ready framed and compiled, which they profess to have received from the Apostles. One may hear the question sometimes asked, for instance, *where* their professed Traditions are to be found, whether there is any *collection* of them, and whether they are printed and published. Now though they would allow that the Traditions of the Church are in fact contained in the writings of its Doctors, still this question proceeds on somewhat of a misconception of their real theory, which seems to be as follows. By Tradition they mean the whole system of faith and ordinances which they have received from the generation before them, and that generation again from the generation before itself. And in this sense undoubtedly we all go by Tradition in matters of this world. Where is the corporation, society, or fraternity of any kind, but has certain received rules and understood practices which are nowhere put down in writing? How often do we hear it said, that this or that person has "acted unusually," that so and so "was never done before," that it is

"against rule," and the like; and then perhaps, to avoid the inconvenience of such irregularity in future, what was before a tacit engagement, is turned into a formal and explicit order or principle. The want of a regulation must be discovered before it is supplied; and the virtual transgression of it goes before its adoption. At this very time great part of the law of the land is administered under the sanction of such a Tradition; it is not contained in any formal or authoritative code, it depends on custom or precedent. There is no explicit written law, for instance, simply declaring murder to be a capital offence; unless indeed we have recourse to the divine command in the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis. Murderers are hanged by *custom*. Such as this is the Tradition of the Church; Tradition is uniform custom. When the Romanists say they adhere to Tradition, they mean that they believe and act as Christians have always believed and acted; they go by the custom, as judges and juries do. And then they go on to allege that there is this important difference between their custom and all other customs in the world; that the tradition of the law, at least in its details, though it has lasted for centuries upon centuries, any how had a beginning in human appointments; whereas theirs, though it has a beginning too, yet, when traced back, has none short of the Apostles of Christ, and is in conse-

quence of divine not of human authority,—is true and intrinsically binding as well as expedient.

If we ask, why it is that these professed Traditions were not reduced to writing, it is answered, that the Christian doctrine, as it has proceeded from the mouth of the Apostles, is too varied and too minute in its details to allow of it. No one you fall in with on the highway, can tell you all his mind at once; much less could the Apostles, possessed as they were of great and supernatural truths, and busied in the propagation of the Church, digest in one Epistle or Treatise a systematic view of the Revelation made to them. And so much at all events we may grant, that they did not do so; there being confessedly little of system or completeness in any portion of the New Testament.

If again it be objected that this notion of an unwritten transmission of the Truth being supposed, there is nothing to show that the faith of to-day was the faith of yesterday, nothing to connect this age and the Apostolic, they maintain, on the contrary, that over and above the corroborative though indirect testimony of ecclesiastical writers, no error could have arisen in the Church without its being protested against and put down on this first appearance; that from all parts of the Church a cry would have been raised against the novelty, and a declaration put forth, as we know was the practice of the early Church, denouncing it. And

thus they would account for the indeterminateness on the one hand, yet on the other the accuracy and availableness of their existing Tradition or unwritten Creed. It is latent, but it lives. It is silent, like the rapids of a river, before the rocks intercept it. It is the Church's unconscious habit of opinion and feeling; which she reflects upon, masters, and expresses, according to the emergency. We see then the mistake of asking for a complete collection of the Roman Traditions; as well might we ask for a collection of a man's tastes and opinions on a given subject. Tradition in its fulness is necessarily unwritten; it is the mode in which a society has felt or acted during a certain period, and it cannot be circumscribed any more than a man's countenance and manner can be conveyed to strangers in any set of propositions.

Such are the Traditions to which the Romanists appeal, whether viewed as latent in the Church's teaching, or as passing into writing and being fixed in the decrees of the Councils or amid the works of the ancient Fathers.

Now how do we of the English Church meet these statements? or rather, I should say, how do the Romanists prove them? For it will be observed, that what has been said hitherto, does not prove that their Traditions are such as they aver, but merely that their theory is consistent with itself. And as a beautiful theory it must, as a whole, ever remain. I do not deny indeed that to a cer-

tain point it is tenable: but this is a very different thing from admitting that it is so as regards those very tenets for which the Romanists would adduce it. They have to show not only that there was such a traditionary system, and that it has lasted to this day, but that their peculiarities are parts of it. But to proceed; how under such circumstances ought we to behave ourselves towards their pretensions? Shall we refuse to consider the subject of Tradition at all, saying that the Bible contains the whole of Divine Revelation, and that the doctrines professedly conveyed by Tradition are only so far Apostolic as they are contained in Scripture? This will be saying what is true, but it will be assuming the point in dispute; it will in no sense be meeting the Romanists. We shall only involve ourselves in great difficulties by so doing. For, let us consider a moment; a Christian does not like to dwell on the following question, but the Romanist will be sure to ask it, and we shall have to answer it; so we had better consider it beforehand. I mean, how do we know that Scripture comes from God? It cannot be denied that we of this age receive it upon general Tradition; we receive through Tradition both the Bible itself, and the doctrine that it is divinely inspired. That doctrine is one of those pious and comfortable truths "which we have heard and known, and such as our fathers have told us," "which God commanded our forefathers to teach their children, that their posterity might know it, and the chil-

dren which were yet unborn; to the intent that when they came up, they might show their children the same[1]." The great multitude of Protestants believe in Scripture precisely on the ground which the Romanists trust in behalf of their own erroneous system, viz. because they have been taught it. To deride Tradition therefore as something irrational or untrustworthy in itself, is to weaken the foundation of our own faith in Scripture, and is very cruel towards the great multitude of uneducated persons, who are obliged to believe what their instructors tell them. If, however, it be said that pious Protestants have "the witness in themselves," as a sure test to their own hearts of the truth of Scripture, the fact is undeniable; and a sufficient and consoling proof is it to them that the *doctrines* in Scripture are true; but it does not prove that the very book we call the Bible was written, and all of it written, by inspiration; nor does it allow us to dispense with the external evidence of Tradition assuring us that it is so.

But if, again, it be said that the New Testament is received as divine, not upon the present traditionary belief of Christians, but upon the evidence of Antiquity, this too, even were it true,—for surely the multitude of Christians know nothing about Antiquity at all,—yet this is exactly what the Ro-

[1] Psalm lxxviii. 3—7.

manists maintain of their unwritten doctrines also. They argue that their present Creed has been the universal belief of all preceding ages, as recorded in the writings of those ages, still extant. Suppose, I say, we take this ground in behalf of the divinity of Holy Scripture, that it is attested by all the writers and other authorities of primitive times: doubtless we are right in doing so; it is the very argument by which we actually do prove the divinity of the sacred Canon; but it is also the very argument which the Romanists put forward for their peculiar errors; viz. that while received on existing Tradition, they are also proved by the unanimous consent of the first ages of Christianity. If then we would leave ourselves room for proving that Scripture is inspired, we must not reject the *notion* and *principle* of the argument from Tradition and Antiquity as something in itself absurd and unworthy of Almighty wisdom. In other words, to refuse to listen to these informants because we have a written word, is a self-destructive course, inasmuch as that written word is proved to be such mainly by these very informants which we reject as if to do honour to it. It is to overthrow our premises with our conclusion. That which ascertains for us the divinity of Scripture, may convey to us other Articles of Faith also, unless Scripture has expressly determined in the negative.

But the sacred volume itself, as well as the

doctrine of its inspiration, comes to us by traditional conveyance. The Protestant of the day asks the Romanist, "*How* do you know your unwritten word comes from the Apostles, received as it is through so many unknown hands through so many ages? A book is something definite and trustworthy; what is written remains. We have the Apostles' writings before us; but we have nothing to guarantee to us the fidelity of those successive informants which stand between the Apostles and the unwritten doctrines you ascribe to them." But the Romanist surely may answer by the counter inquiry, *how* he on his part knows that what he considers their writings are really such, and really what the Fathers possessed and witness to be theirs: "You have a printed book," he may argue; "the Apostles did not write that; it was printed from another book, and that again from another, and so on[1]. After going back a long way, you will trace it to a manuscript in the dark ages, written by you know not whom, copied from some other manuscript you know not what or when, and there the trace is lost. You profess, indeed, that it runs up to the very autograph of the Apostles; but with your rigorous notions of proof, it would be more to your purpose to produce it than to give probable reasons for the fidelity of the copy. Till you do this, you are resting on a series of unknown

[1] Stillingfleet's Grounds, i. 7. 6—8. pp. 198—202.

links as well as we; you are trusting a mere tradition of men. It is quite as possible for human hands to have tampered with the written as with the unwritten word; or at least if corruption of the latter is the more probable of the two, the difference of the cases is one of degree, and not any essential distinction[1]." Now whatever explanations the Protestant in question makes in behalf of the preservation of the written word, will be found applicable in the *theory* to the unwritten. For instance, he may argue, and irresistibly, that a number of manuscripts of various, and some of very early times, are still extant, and these belonging to different places and derived from sources distinct from each other; and that they all agree together. If the New Testament were practised upon, this must have happened before all these families of copies were made; which is to throw back the fraud upon such very early times as are a guarantee for believing it to have been impracticable[2]. Or he may argue that it was the acknowledged duty of the Church to keep and guard the Scriptures, and that in matter of fact her various branches were very careful to do so; accordingly that it is quite incredible that the authentic text should be lost in spite of so many trustees, as they may be called, and an altered copy or a forgery substituted.

[1] Milner's End of Controversy, Letter 9.

[2] Thorndike, part i. ch. 33.

Or again, he may allege that the early Fathers are frequent in quoting the New Testament in their own works; and that these quotations accurately accord with the copy of it which we at present possess.

Such as these are the arguments we as well as the ordinary Protestant use against the infidel in behalf of the written word, and most powerfully; but it must be confessed that they are applicable in their *nature* to traditionary teaching also; they are such as the Roman doctrines *might* possess as far as the *a priori* view of the case is concerned.

How then are we to meet the Romanists, seeing we cannot join issue with them, or cut short the controversy, by a mere appeal to Scripture? We must meet them, and may do so fearlessly, on the ground of Antiquity, to which they betake themselves. We followed the Protestant's challenge, in arguing from mere Scripture in our defence; we must not, and need not shrink from the invitation of the Romanist to stand or fall by Antiquity. Truth alone is consistent with itself; we are willing to take either the test of Antiquity or of Scripture. As we accord to the Protestant sectary, that Scripture is the inspired treasury of the whole faith, but maintain that his doctrines are not in Scripture, so we agree with the Romanist in appealing to Antiquity as our great teacher, but deny that his doctrines are to be found in Antiquity. So far then is clear; we do not deny the

force of Tradition in the abstract; we do not deny the soundness of the argument from Antiquity; but we challenge the Romanist to prove the matter of fact. We deny that his doctrines are in Antiquity any more than they are in the Bible; and we maintain that his professed Tradition is not really such, that it is a Tradition of men, that it is not continuous, that it stops short of the Apostles, that the history of its introduction is known. On both accounts then his doctrines are innovations; because they run counter to the doctrine of Antiquity, and because they rest upon what is historically an upstart Tradition.

This statement is intelligible and clear, but it leads to this conclusion. The Bible indeed is a small book, but the writings of Antiquity are voluminous; and to read them is the work of a life. It is plain then that the controversy with the Romanists is not an easy one, not open to every one to take up. And this is the case for another reason also. A private Christian may put what meaning he pleases on many parts of Scripture, and no one can hinder him. If interfered with, he can promptly answer that it is his opinion, and may appeal to his right of Private Judgment. But he cannot so deal with Antiquity. History is a record of facts; and "facts," according to the proverb, "are stubborn things." Ingenious men may misrepresent them, or suppress them for a while; but in the end they will be duly ascertained and

appreciated. The writings of the Fathers are far too ample to allow of a disputant resting in one or two obscure or ambiguous passages in them, and permanently turning such to his own account, which he may do in the case of Scripture. For two reasons, then, controversy with Romanists is laborious; because it takes us to ancient Church history, and because it does not allow scope to the offhand or capricious decisions of private judgment.

However, it must be observed, for the same reasons, though more laborious, it is a surer controversy. We are more likely to come to an end; it does not turn upon opinions but on facts.

This may be put in somewhat a different point of view. You know that three centuries ago took place a great schism in the Western Church, which thenceforth divided into two large bodies, the Romanists on one hand, the Protestants on the other. On the latter side it is usual to reckon our own Church, though really on neither: from which after a time certain portions split off, and severally set up a religion and communion for themselves. Now supposing we had to dispute with these separated portions, the Presbyterians, Baptists, Independents, or other Protestants, on the subject of their separation, they would at once avow the *fact*, but they would deny that it was a *sin*. The elementary controversy between us and them would be one of *doctrine* and *principle;* viz. whether separa-

tion was or was not a sin. It is far otherwise as regards the Romanists; they as well as ourselves allow, or rather maintain, the criminality of schism, and that a very great sin was committed at the Reformation, whether by the one party, or by the other, or by both. The only question is, *which* party committed it; the Romanists lay it at our door, we retort it, and justly, upon them. Thus we join issue with them on a question of *fact;* one which cannot be settled without a sufficient stock of learning on the part of the disputants. So again the Calvinistic controversy is in great measure dependent on abstract reasoning and philosophical discussion; whereas no one can determine by *a priori* arguments whether or not the Papacy be a persecuting power [1].

On the whole, then, it appears from what has been said, that our controversies with the Protestants are easy to handle, but interminable, being disputes about opinions; but those with Romanists arduous, but instructive, as relating rather to matters of fact.

These last remarks throw some light on the characteristic differences of system as well as of argumentative basis between Protestantism and Romanism respectively. Our controversy with Romanists turns more upon facts than upon first prin-

[1] Vide some excellent remarks on the subject in the British Magazine for March, 1836, article *Church Matters*.

ciples; with Protestant sectaries it is more about principles than about facts. This general contrast between the two religions, which I would not seem to extend beyond what the sober truth warrants, for the sake of an antithesis, is paralleled in the common remark of our most learned controversialists, that Romanism *holds the foundation*, or *is the truth overlaid with corruptions*. This is saying the same thing in other words. They discern in it the great outlines of primitive Christianity, but they find it all touched, if nothing worse, touched and tainted by error, and so made worthless or nearly so to the multitude of men,—worthless, except to men of high and spiritual minds, who can undo the evil, arresting the tendencies of the system by their own purity, and restoring it to the sweetness and freshness of its original state. The very force of the word *corruption* implies this to be the peculiarity of Romanism. All error indeed of whatever kind may be called a corruption of truth; still we properly apply the term to such kinds of error as are not denials but perversions, distortions, or excesses of it. Such is the relation of Romanism towards true Catholicity. It is the misdirection and abuse, not the absence of right principle. To take a familiar illustration; rashness and cowardice are both faults, and both unlike true courage; but cowardice implies the absence of the principle of courage, whereas rashness is but the extravagance of the principle. Again, prodigality and avarice

are both vices, and unlike true and wise liberality; but avarice differs from it in principle, prodigality in matters of detail, in the time, place, person, manner of giving, and the like. On the other hand, prodigality may accidentally be the more dangerous extreme, as being the more subtle vice, the more popular, the more likely to attract people, the more like a virtue. This is somewhat like the position of Romanism, Protestantism, and Catholic Truth relatively to each other. Romanism is an unnatural and misshapen development of the Truth; not the less dangerous because it retains traces of its genuine features, and usurps its name, as vice borrows the name of virtue, as pride is often called self-respect, or cowardice or worldly wisdom goes by the name of prudence, or rashness by that of courage. On the other hand, no one would ever call a miser liberal; and so no one would call a mere Protestant a Catholic, except an altogether new sense was put on the word to suit a purpose. Romanism has the principle of true Catholicism perverted; popular Protestantism is wanting in the principle. Lastly, virtue lies in a mean, is a point, almost invisible to the world, hard to find, acknowledged but by the few; and so Christian Truth in these latter ages, when the world has broken up the Church, has been but a stranger upon the earth, and has been hidden and superseded by counterfeits.

The same view of Romanism is implied when

we call our ecclesiastical changes in the sixteenth century a Reformation. A building has not been reformed or repaired, when it has been pulled down and built up again; but the word is used when it has been left substantially what it was before, only amended or restored in detail. In like manner, we Anglicans do not profess a different religion from the Romanists, we profess their Faith *all but* their corruptions [1].

Again, this same character of Romanism as a perversion, not a contradiction of Christian Truth, is confessed as often as members of our Church in controversy with it contend, as they may rightly do, that it must be judged not by the formal decrees of the Council of Trent, as its advocates are fond of doing, but by its practical working and its existing state in the countries which profess it. Romanists would fain confine us in controversy to the consideration of the bare and acknowledged principles of their Church; we consider this to be an unfair restriction; why? because we conceive that Romanism is far more faulty in its details than in its formal principles, and that Councils, to which its adherents would send us, have more to do with its abstract system than with its practical working, that the abstract system contains for the most part *tendencies* to evil, which the actual working brings out, thus supplying illustrations of that

[1] Vid. the Canons of 1603, No. 30, "The abuse of a thing,' &c.

evil which is really though latently contained in principles capable in themselves of an honest interpretation. Thus for instance, the decree concerning Purgatory might be charitably made almost to conform to the doctrine of St. Austin or St. Chrysostom, were it not for the comment afforded by the popular belief as existing in those countries which hold it, and by the opinions of the Roman schools.

It is something to the purpose also to observe, that this peculiar character of Romanism, as being substantial Truth corrupted, has tended to strengthen the popular notion, that it, or the Church of Rome, or the Pope or Bishop of Rome, is the Antichrist foretold in Scripture. That there is in Romanism something very unchristian, I fully admit, or rather maintain; but I will observe here that this strange two-fold aspect of the Roman system seems in matter of fact to have had some share in retaining for it that fearful title,—and in this way. When Protestants have come to look at it closely, they have found truth and error united in so subtle a combination, (as is the case with all corruptions, as with sullied snow, or fruit over-ripe, or metal alloyed) they have found truth so impregnated with error, and error so sheltered by truth, so much too adducible in defence of the system, which, from want of learning or other cause, they could not refute without refuting their own faith and practice at the same time, so much in it of high and noble principle, or salutary usage, which they had lost, and, as losing, were, in this respect, in

an inferior state, that for this very reason, as the readiest, safest, simplest solution of their difficulties, not surely the fairest, but the readiest, as cutting the knot and extricating them at once from their position, they have pronounced Romanism to be the Antichrist; I say, for the very reason that so much may be said for it, that it is so difficult to refute, so subtle and crafty, so seductive,—properties which are tokens of the hateful and fearful deceiver who is to come [1]. Of course I do not mean to say that this perplexing aspect of Romanism has originally brought upon it the stigma under consideration; but that it has served to induce people indolently to acquiesce in it without examination.

In these remarks, I have appealed to the common opinion of the world; which is altogether confirmed when we come actually to compare together the doctrinal articles of our own and of the Roman faith. In both systems the same Creeds are acknowledged. Among other points in common we both hold, that certain doctrines are necessary to be believed for salvation; we both believe in the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement; in original sin; in the necessity of regeneration; in the supernatural grace of the Sacraments; in the Apostolical succession; in the obli-

[1] Vide Mr. Bickersteth on Popery, ed. 5, pp. 17—20. 52.

gation of faith and obedience, and the eternity of future punishment.

In conclusion I would observe, that I have been speaking of Romanism, not as an existing political sect among us, but considered in itself, in its abstract system, and in a state of quiescence. Viewed indeed in action, and as realized in its present partizans, it is but one out of the many denominations which are the disgrace of our age and country. In temper and conduct it does but resemble that unruly Protestantism which lies on our other side, and it bears without reluctance to be allied and to act with it towards the overthrow of a purer religion. But herein is the difference of the one extreme from the other; the political Romanist of the day becomes such in spite of his fundamental principles, the political Protestant in accordance with his. The best Dissenter is he who is least of a Dissenter; the best Roman Catholic is he who comes nearest to a Catholic. The reproach of the present Romanists is that they are inconsistent; and it is a reproach which is popularly felt to be just. They are confessedly unlike the loyal men who rallied round the throne of our first Charles, or who fought, however ill-advisedly, for his exiled descendants. The particular nature of this inconsistency will be discussed in some following Lectures; meanwhile I have here considered Roman-

ism in its abstract professions for two reasons. First, I would willingly believe, that in spite of the violence and rancour of its public supporters, there are many individuals in their communion of gentle, affectionate, and deeply religious minds; and such a belief is justified when we find that the *necessary* difference between us and them is not one of essential principle, that it is the difference merely of superstition from religion, not of unbelief from religion. Next, I have insisted upon it, by way of showing what must be the nature of their Reformation, if in God's merciful counsels a Reformation awaits them. It will be far more a reform of their popular usages and opinions, and ecclesiastical policy, or a destruction of what is commonly called Popery, than of their abstract principles and maxims. On the other hand, let it not be supposed because I have spoken without sympathy for popular Protestantism in the abstract, that this is all one with being harsh towards individuals professing it; far from it. The worse their creed the more sympathy is due to their persons; chiefly to those, for they most demand and will most patiently suffer it, who least concur in their own doctrine, and are held by it in an unwilling captivity. Would that they would be taught that their religion, whatever it is, never can satisfy their souls, and does not admit of reform, but must come to nought. Would that they could be persuaded to transfer their misplaced and most unrequited affection from the systems of men to the

One Holy Spouse of Christ, the Church Catholic, which in this country manifests herself in the Church commonly so called as her representative! Nor need we despair that as regards many of them this wish may yet be fulfilled.

LECTURE II.

ON ROMANISM AS NEGLECTFUL OF ANTIQUITY.

We differ from the Romanists, as I have said, more in our view of historical facts than in principles; but in saying this, I am speaking, not of their actual system, nor of their actual mode of defending it, but of their professions, professions, which in their mouths are mere professions, while they are truths in ours. The principles, professed by both parties, are at once the foundation of our own theology, and what is called an *argumentum ad hominem* against theirs. They profess to appeal to primitive Christianity; we honestly take their ground, as holding it ourselves; but when the controversy grows animated, and descends into details, they suddenly leave it and desire to finish the dispute on some other field. In like manner in their teaching and acting, they begin as if in the name of all the Fathers at once, but will be found in the sequel to prove, teach, and conduct matters

simply in their own name. Our differences from them, considered not in theory but in fact, are in no sense matters of detail and questions of degree. In truth, there is a tenet in their theology which assumes quite a new position in relation to the rest, when we pass from the abstract and quiescent theory to the practical workings of the system. The infallibility of the Church is then found to be its first principle, whereas, before, it was a necessary, but a secondary doctrine. Whatever principles they profess in theory, resembling, or coincident with our own, yet when they come to particulars, when they have to prove this or that article of their creed, they supersede the appeal to Scripture and Antiquity by the pretence of the infallibility of the Church, thus solving the whole question, by a summary and final interpretation both of Antiquity and of Scripture.

This is what takes place in the actual course of the controversy. At the same time it is obvious that, while they are as yet but engaged in tracing out their elementary principles, and recommending them to our notice, they cannot assign to this influential doctrine the same sovereign place in their system. It cannot be taken for granted as a first principle in the controversy; if so, nothing remains to be proved, and the controversy is at an end, for every doctrine is contained in it by implication, and no doctrine but might as fairly be assumed as a first principle also. Accordingly, in order to make

a show of proving it, its advocates must necessarily fall back upon some more intelligible doctrine; and that is, the authority of Antiquity, to which they boldly appeal, as I described in my last Lecture. It follows that there is a striking dissimilarity, or even inconsistency between their system as quiescent, and as in action, in its abstract principles, and its reasonings and discussions on particular points. In the Creed of Pope Pius not a word is said expressly about the Church's infallibility; it forms no Article of faith there. Her interpretation, indeed, of Scripture is recognized as authoritative; but so also is the "unanimous consent of Fathers." But when we put aside the creeds and professions of our opponents for their actual teaching and disputing, they will be found to care very little for the Fathers, whether as primitive or as concordant; they believe the existing Church to be infallible, and if ancient belief is at variance with it, which of course they do not allow, but if it is, then Antiquity must be mistaken; that is all. Thus Romanism, which even in its abstract system, must be considered a perversion or distortion of the truth, is in its actual and public manifestation a far more serious error. It is then a disproportionate or monstrous development of a theory in itself extravagant. I propose now to give some illustration of it, thus considered, viz., to show that in fact it substitutes the authority of the Church for that of Antiquity.

First, let us understand what is meant by saying that Antiquity is of authority in religious questions. Both Romanists and ourselves maintain as follows:—that whatever doctrine the primitive ages unanimously attest, whether by consent of Fathers, or by Councils, or by the events of history, or by controversies, or in whatever way, whatever may fairly and reasonably be considered to be the universal belief of those ages, is to be received as coming from the Apostles. This Canon, as it may be called, rests upon the principle, which we act on daily, that what many independent and competent witnesses guarantee, is true. The concordant testimony of the Church Catholic to certain doctrines, such as the Incarnation, is an argument in its behalf the same in kind as that for the being of a God, derived from the belief of all nations in an intelligent Providence. If it be asked, why we do not argue in this way from the existing as well as from the ancient Church, we answer that Christendom now differs from itself in all points except those in which it is already known to have agreed of old; so that we cannot make use of it if we would. So far, then, as it can be used, it is but a confirmation of Antiquity, though a valuable one. Besides, the greater is the interval between a given age and that of the Apostles, and the more intimate the connexion and influence of country with country, the less can the separate branches of the Church be considered as independent witnesses.

In the Roman controversy, then, the witness of a later age, would seldom answer to the notion of a Catholic Tradition, inasmuch as the various parts of Christendom either would not agree together, or when they did, would not be distinct witnesses. Thus Ancient Consent is, practically, the only, or main kind of Tradition which now remains to us.

The Rule or Canon which I have been explaining, is best known as expressed in the words of Vincentius, of Lerins, in his celebrated treatise upon the Tests of Heresy and Error[1]; viz., that that is to be received as Apostolic which has been taught "always, everywhere, and by all." Catholicity, Antiquity, and Consent of Fathers, is the proper evidence of the fidelity or Apostolicity of a professed Tradition. Infant Baptism, for instance, must have been appointed by the Apostles, or we should not find it received so early, so generally, with such a silence concerning its introduction. The Christian faith is dogmatic, because it has been so accounted in every Church up to this day. The washing of the feet, enjoined in the 13th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, is not a necessary rite or a Sacrament, because it has never been so observed;—did Christ or His Apostles intend

[1] This work, which is short, perspicuous, and eloquent, is now in course of republication at Oxford with a translation. It will amply repay the pains of more than one perusal.

otherwise, it would follow, (what is surely impossible,) that a new and erroneous view of our Lord's words arose even in the Apostles' lifetime, and was from the first every where substituted for the true. Again; fabrics for public worship are allowable and fitting under the Gospel, though our Lord contrasts worshipping at Jerusalem or Gerizim with worshipping in spirit and truth, because they ever have been so esteemed. The Sabbatical rest is changed from the Sabbath to the Lord's-day, because it has never been otherwise, since Christianity was a religion.

It follows that Councils or individuals are of authority, when we have reason to suppose they are trustworthy informants of Apostolical Tradition. If a Council is attended by many Bishops from various parts of Christendom, and if they speak one and all the same doctrine, without constraint, and bear witness to their having received it from their Fathers, that they never heard of any other doctrine, and that they verily believe it to be Apostolic,—great consideration is due to its decisions. If, on the other hand, they do not profess to bear witness to a fact, but merely to deduce from Scripture for themselves, besides or beyond what they received from their Fathers, whatever deference is due to them, it is not of that peculiar kind which is contemplated by the Rule of Vincentius. In like manner, if some great Christian writer, of high character, extensive learning, and ample means of information, attests the universality of a certain

doctrine, and the absence of all trace of its introduction short of the Apostles' times, such a one, though an individual, yet as the spokesman of his generation, would be entitled to especial deference. On the other hand, the most highly gifted and religious persons are liable to error, and are not to be implicitly trusted where they profess to be recording, not a fact, but their own opinion. Christians know no Master on earth; they defer, indeed, to the judgment, obey the advice, and follow the example of good men in ten thousand ways, but they do not make their opinions part of what is emphatically called the Faith. Christ alone is the Author and Finisher of Faith in all its senses; His servants do but witness it, and their statements are, then, only valuable when they are testimonies, not deductions or conjectures. Where they speak of themselves, about points of faith, and much more when they are at variance with Catholic Antiquity, we can bear to examine and even condemn the uncertain or the erroneous opinion. Thus Pope Gregory might be an advocate for a doctrine resembling that of Purgatory; St. Gregory Nyssen may have used language available in defence of Transubstantiation; St. Ephraim may have invoked the Virgin; St. Austin might believe in the irrespective Predestination of individuals; St. Cyril might afford a handle to Eutyches; Tertullian might be a Montanist; Origen might deny the eternity of future punishment; yet all such in-

stances, whatever be their weight, from other circumstances, have no weight at all one way or other in the argument from Catholic Tradition. In like manner, Universality, of course, proves nothing, if it is traceable to an origin short of Apostolic, whether to present influences from without, or to some assignable point of time. Whatever judgment is to be formed of a certain practice or doctrine, be it right or wrong, and on whatever grounds, at any rate, it is not part or adjunct of the Faith, but must be advocated on its intrinsic propriety, or usefulness, or, if tenable, is binding in duty only on particular persons or parties, ages or countries, if its history resembles that of the secular establishment of the Church, or of Monachism, or of putting to death for religious opinions, or of sprinkling in Baptism, or the denial of the cup to the laity, or of Ecclesiastical Liberty,—subjects, which I do not, of course, put on a footing with each other, but name together as being one and all external to that circle of religious truth which the Apostles sealed with their own signature as the Gospel Faith, and delivered over to the Church after them.

But here it may be asked, whether it is possible accurately to know the limits of that Faith, from the peculiar circumstances in which it was first spread, which hindered it from being realized in the first centuries in its complete proportions. It may be conjectured, for instance, that the doctrine

of what is familiarly called "Church and King" is Apostolic, except that it could not be developed, while a heathen and persecuting power was sovereign. This is true; and hence a secondary argument is derivable from Ancient Consent in any doctrine, even when it does not appeal to traditionary reception; viz., on the principle that what an early age held universally, must have been unconsciously transmitted from the Apostles, and must be the due expression of their mind and spirit, under changed circumstances, and therefore is binding on us in piety, though not part of the Faith. The same consideration applies to the interpretation of Scripture; but this is to enter on a distinct branch of the subject, to which I shall advert hereafter.

In the foregoing remarks I have not been attempting any systematic discussion of the arguments from Antiquity, which is unnecessary for our present purpose, but have said just so much as may open a way for illustrating the point in hand, viz., the disrespect shown towards it by Romanists. In theory, indeed, and in their professions, as has already been noticed, they defer to the authority of the Rule of Vincent as implicitly as we do; and commonly without much hazard, for Protestantism in general has so transgressed it, that, little as it tells for Rome, it tells still more against the wild doctrines which go under that name. Besides, Romanists are obliged to maintain it by their very

pretensions to be considered the One True Catholic and Apostolic Church. At the same time there is this remarkable difference, even of theory, between them and Vincentius, that the latter is altogether silent on the subject of the Pope's Infallibility, whether considered as an attribute of his see, or as attaching to him in General Council. If Vincentius had the sentiments and feelings of a modern Romanist, it is incomprehensible that, in a treatise written to guide the private Christian in matters of Faith, he should have said not a word about the Pope's supreme authority, nay, not even about the Infallibility of the Church Catholic. He refers the inquirer to a triple rule, difficult, surely, and troublesome to use, compared with that which is ready furnished by Romanism. Applying his own rule to his work itself, we may unhesitatingly conclude that the Pope's supreme authority in matters of Faith, is no Catholic or Apostolic truth, because he was ignorant of it.

However, Romanists are obliged by their professions to appeal to Antiquity, and they therefore do so. But enough has been said already to suggest that, where men are indisposed towards such an appeal, where they determine to be captious and take exceptions, and act the disputant and sophist rather than the earnest inquirer, it admits of easy evasion, and may be made to conclude anything or nothing. The Rule of Vincent is not of a mathematical or demonstrative character, but moral, and

requires practical judgment and good sense to apply it. For instance; what is meant by being "taught *always?*" does it mean in every century, or every year, or every month? Does "*every where*" mean in every country, or in every diocese? And does "the *Consent of Fathers*," require us to produce the direct testimony of every one of them? How many Fathers, how many places, how many instances constitute a fulfilment of the test proposed? It is, then, from the nature of the case, a condition which never can be satisfied as fully as it might have been; it admits of various and unequal application in various instances; and what degree of application is enough must be decided by the same principles which guide us in the conduct of life, which determine us in politics, or trade, or war, which lead us to accept Revelation at all, for which we have but probability to show at most, nay, to believe in the existence of an Intelligent Creator. This character, indeed, of Vincent's Canon, will but recommend it to the disciples of the School of Butler, from its agreement with the analogy of nature; but it affords a ready loophole for such as do not wish to be persuaded, of which both Protestants and Romanists are not slow to avail themselves.

Here, however, we are concerned with the Romanists. For instance: if some passage from one of the Fathers contradicts their present doctrine, and it is then objected that what even

one early writer has contradicted was not Catholic at the time he contradicted it, they unhesitatingly condemn the passage as unsound and mistaken. And then follows the question, is the writer in question to be credited as reporting the current views of his age, or had he the hardihood though he knew them well, to contradict, yet without saying he contradicted them; and this can only be decided by the circumstances of the case, which an ingenious disputant may easily turn this way or that. They proceed in the same way, though a number of authorities be produced; one is misinterpreted, another is put out of sight, a third is admitted but undervalued. This is not said by way of accusation here, though of course it is a heavy charge against the Romanists, nor with the admission that their attempts are successful, for after all, words have a distinct meaning in spite of sophistry, and there is a true and a false in every matter. I am but showing *how* Romanists reconcile their abstract reverence for Antiquity with their Romanism,—with their creed, and their notion of the Church's infallibility in declaring it; how small their success is, and how great their unfairness, is another question. Whatever judgment we form either of their conduct or its issue, such is the fact, that they extol the Fathers as a whole, and disparage them individually; they call them one by one Doctors of the Church, yet they explain away one by one their arguments, judgment,

and testimony. They refuse to combine their separate and coincident statements; they take each by himself, and settle with the first before they go on to the next. And thus their boasted reliance on the Fathers comes, at length, to this,—to identify Catholicity with the decrees of Councils, and to admit those Councils only which the Pope has confirmed.

Such is that peculiarity of Romanism which is now to be illustrated; and with this purpose I will first quote one or two passages from writers of authority, by way of showing the abstract reverence in which Romanism holds the Fathers, and then show from others how little they carry it into practice.

Bossuet in his celebrated Exposition thus speaks: "The Catholic Church, far from wishing to become absolute mistress of her faith, as it is laid to her charge, has, on the contrary, done every thing in her power to tie up her own hands, and to deprive herself of the means of innovation; for she not only submits to the Scripture, but in order to banish for ever these arbitrary interpretations, which would substitute the whims of men for the Word of God, she hath bound herself to interpret it, in what concerns faith and morality, according to the sense of the Holy Fathers, from which she professes never to depart; declaring by all her Councils, and by all her professions of faith, that she receives no dogma whatever that is not

conformable to the Tradition of all preceding ages [1]."

Milner in his End of Controversy adopts the same tone. "When any fresh controversy arises in the Church, the fundamental maxim of the Bishops and Popes, to whom it belongs to decide upon it, is, not to consult their own private opinion or interpretation of Scripture, but to inquire 'what is and has ever been the doctrine of the Church,' concerning it. Hence, their cry is and ever has been, on such occasions, as well in her Councils as out of them, 'So we have received, so the Universal Church believes, let there be no new doctrine, none but what has been delivered down to us by Tradition.' Again; 'The infallibility . . . of our Church is not a power of telling all things, past, present, and to come, such as the Pagans ascribed to their oracles; but merely the aid of God's Holy Spirit, to enable her truly to decide what her faith is, and ever has been, in such articles as have been made known to her by Scripture and Tradition [2].'" It seems from these passages, that the writings of Antiquity are to be considered as limitations and safeguards put upon the Church's teaching, records by which she is ever bound to direct her course, out of which she ascertains and proves those doctrinal statements which, when formally made, are infallible. The same view is contained in the fol-

[1] Chap. xviii.

[2] Letters xi. and xii.

lowing extracts from Bellarmine, except that, writing, not an Apology, but in controversy, he insists less pointedly upon it. For instance: "We do not impugn, rather we maintain against impugners, that the first foundation of our faith is the Word of God," that is, written and unwritten, "ministered by Apostles and Prophets: .. only we add, that, besides this first foundation, another secondary foundation is needed, that is, the *witness* of the Church. For we do not know for certain what God has revealed, except by the *testimony* of the Church[1]." And in another place: "That alone is matter of faith, which is revealed by God, either mediately or immediately; but divine revelations are partly written, partly unwritten. . . . The decrees of Councils and Popes, and the Consent of Doctors, . . . then only make a doctrine an article of faith, when they explain the Word of God, or deduce any thing from it[2]."

Let us now proceed from the theory of the Roman Church to its practice. This is seen in the actual conduct of its theologians, some of whom shall here be cited as a sample of the whole.

First, I refer to the well known occasion of Bishop Bull's writing his "Defence of the Nicene Faith." He was led to do so by an attack upon the orthodoxy of the Ante-Nicene Fathers from a quarter whence it was at first sight little to be

[1] De Verb. Dei Interpr. iii. 10. [2] De Purg. i. 15.

expected. The learned assailant was not an Arian, or Socinian, or Latitudinarian, but Petavius, a member of the Jesuit body. The tendency of the portion of his great work on Theological Doctrines which treats of the Trinity is too plain to be mistaken. The historian Gibbon does not scruple to pronounce that its "object, or at least, effect," was "to arraign," and as he considers, successfully, "the faith of the Ante-Nicene Fathers;" and it was used in no long time by Arian writers in their own justification. Thus, Romanist, heretic, and infidel, unite with one another in this instance in denying the orthodoxy of the first centuries, just as at this moment the same three parties are banded together to oppose ourselves. We trust we see in this circumstance an omen of our own resemblance to the Primitive Church, since we hold the same position with it towards these parties, and are in the centre point, as of doctrine, so of attack. But to return to Petavius. This learned author, in his elaborate work on the Trinity, shows that he would rather prove the early Confessors and Martyrs to be heterodox, than that they should exist as a court of appeal from the decisions of his own Church; and he accordingly sacrifices, without remorse, Justin, Clement, Irenæus, and their brethren to the maintenance of the infallibility of Rome. Or to put the matter in another point of view, truer, perhaps, though less favourable still to Petavius, he consents that the Catholic doctrine

of the Holy Trinity should so far rest on the mere declaration of the Church, that before it was formally defined, there was no heresy in rejecting it, provided he can thereby gain for Rome the freedom of making decrees unfettered by the recorded judgments of Antiquity. This it was which excited the zeal of our great theologian, Bishop Bull, whom I will here quote, both in order to avail myself of his authority, and because of the force and clearness of his remarks. In the introduction then of his celebrated work, after enumerating certain heretical and latitudinarian attempts to disparage the orthodoxy of the Ante-Nicene centuries, he speaks as follows of Petavius:—

"But I am beyond measure astonished at that great and profoundly learned man, Dionysius Petavius; who, for all the reverence which he professes for the Nicene Council, and his constant acknowledgment that the faith confirmed in it against the Arians, is truly Apostolic and Catholic, yet makes them an admission, which, if it holds, goes the full length of establishing their heresy, and of disparaging, and so overthrowing the credit and authority of the Nicene Council; namely, that the Rulers and Fathers of the Church before its date were nearly all of the very same sentiments as Arius..... What was Petavius' view in so writing, it is difficult to say. Some suspect that he was secretly an Arian, and wished insidiously so to recommend the heresy to others. This was

the opinion of Sandius," the heretical writer, "whom I just now mentioned..... However, Petavius's own writings make it, I think, abundantly clear, that this pretender's supposition is altogether false. If some underhand purpose must be assigned for his writing as he did, and it be not sufficient to ascribe it to his customary audacity and recklessness in criticising and animadverting on the Holy Fathers, I should give my opinion that this author, as being a Jesuit, had in view the interests of Popery rather than of Arianism. For, granting the Catholic Doctors of the first three centuries held nearly all of them that very error of doctrine, which the Nicene Council afterwards condemned in Arius as heresy, (which is Petavius' statement) two things will readily follow: first, that little deference is to be paid to the Fathers of the first three centuries, to whom reformed Catholics specially appeal, as if in their time the chief articles of the Christian faith were not yet sufficiently understood and developed; next, that Œcumenical Councils have the power of framing or (as Petavius speaks) of establishing and publishing new articles of faith, which may fitly serve to prepare the ground for those additions which the Fathers at Trent annexed to the Rule of Faith and obtruded on Christendom; though even this will not be a sufficient defence of the Roman faith, since the meeting at Trent was anything but a General Council. However, the masters of that school, it seems, feel no compunction at erecting

their own pseudo-catholic faith on the ruins of that which is truly Catholic. The Divine oracles themselves are to be convicted of undue obscurity, the most holy Doctors, Bishops, and Martyrs of the primitive Church are to be charged with heresy; so that in one way or other the credit and authority of the degenerate Roman Church may be patched up and made good. At the same time these sophists, to be sure, are the very men to execrate us as brethren of cursed Ham, and scoffers and despisers of the venerable Fathers of the Church, and to boast that they themselves religiously follow the faith of the ancient Doctors, and hold their writings in highest reverence. That such a nefarious purpose led to Petavius' statement, I do not dare say for certain, but leave the matter to the heart-searching God. Meanwhile, what the Jesuit has written, as it is most welcome to modern Arians, (all of whom on that account revere and embrace him as their champion) so, as I would affirm confidently, it is manifestly contrary to truth, and most injurious and slanderous as well towards the Nicene Fathers as the Ante-Nicene [1]."

So remarkable an instance as this is not of every day's occurrence. I do not mean to say there have been many such systematic and profound attempts as this on the part of Petavius, at what may be justly called parricide. Rome even, steeled as

[1] Defens. Fid. Nicen, Procem. § 7, 8.

she is against the kindlier feelings, when her interests require, has more of tender mercy left than to bear them often. In this very instance, the French Church showed their compunction at the crime, on Bull's subsequent defence of the Nicene Anathema, by transmitting to him through Bossuet, the congratulations of the whole clergy of France assembled at St. Germain's, for the service he had rendered to the Church Catholic. However, not even the Gallican Church, moderate as she confessedly has been, can side with Rome without cooling in loyalty towards the primitive ages; as will appear by the following remarks extracted from the Benedictine edition of St. Ambrose. The Benedictines of St. Maur are, as is well known, of a school of Romanism distinct from the Jesuits, to whom Patavius belonged. So much so, that their edition of Bossuet's works is accused of Jansenism, at least so I understand the English editor of his Exposition, who speaks of its being "infected with the spirit of that sect which disfigures everything that it touches." Their learning and candour are well known; and one can hardly accuse those who spend their lives in an act of ministration towards the holy Fathers, of any intentional irreverence towards them. The following passage occurs in their introduction to one of the works of St. Ambrose, on occasion of that Father making some statements at variance with the present Roman views of the intermediate state.

"It is not indeed wonderful that Ambrose should

have written in this way concerning the state of souls; but what seems almost incredible is the uncertainty and inconsistency of the holy Fathers on the subject, *from the very times of the Apostles* to the Pontificate of Gregory XI. and the Council of Florence; that is, *for almost the whole of fourteen centuries.* For they not only differ from one another, *as ordinarily happens in such questions before the Church has defined*, but they are even inconsistent with themselves, sometimes allowing, sometimes denying to the same souls the enjoyment of the clear vision of the Divine Nature[1]."

It may be asked, how it is the fault of the Benedictines if the Fathers are inconsistent with each other and with themselves in any point; and what harm there is in stating the fact, if it is undeniable? But my complaint with them would be on a different ground, viz. that they profess to know better than the Fathers; that they, or rather the religious system which they are bound to follow, consider questions to be determinable on which the early Fathers were ignorant, and suppose the Church is so absolutely the author of our faith, that what the Fathers did not believe, we must believe under pain of forfeiting heaven. Whether Rome be right or wrong, this instance contains an acknowledgment, as far as it goes, that her religion is not that of the Fathers; that her Creed is as

[1] Admonit. in Libr. de Bono Mortis.

novel as those Protestant extravagances from which in other respects it is so far removed.

I proceed to select one instance more of the disrespect shown by Romanists towards the Fathers, from Bellarmine's celebrated work on the Controversies of Faith. The name of this eminent writer is familiar to most persons who have read ever so little concerning Romanism; but it brings with it less favourable associations than its owner deserves. The better the man individually, the worse the system that makes him speak uncandidly or presumptuously; and that both as a man and as a writer he has no ordinary qualities, will be clear from what is said of him by two English authors of this day, who are far from agreeing either with him or with each other. Bishop Marsh, in his Comparative View of the Churches of England and Rome, calls him "the most acute, the most methodical, the most comprehensive, and at the same time *one of the most candid* among the controversialists of the Church of Rome[1]." On the other hand, a recent writer of very different religious sympathies from the Bishop, speaks of him in a spirit honourable both to himself and the object of his panegyric. "I cannot read," he says, "the pious practical works of Bellarmine, himself the great defender of Popery, and know that he said, 'upon account of the uncertainty of life it is most

[1] Chapter I.

safe to rely on Christ alone,' without hoping that he was led before his death to renounce all confidence in anything but God's testimony concerning His Son, and so became a child of our heavenly Father, and an heir of our Saviour's kingdom [1]." Others may humbly trust he was all through his life, as he had been first made in Baptism, 'a child of grace;' but, however this be, the testimony afforded to Bellarmine's personal piety in this extract is express, and under the circumstances remarkable.

To these may be added the remarks of Mosheim concerning him: "His candour and plain dealing exposed him," he says, "to the censures of several divines of his own communion; for he collected with diligence the reasons and objections of his adversaries, and proposed them for the most part in their full force with integrity and exactness. Had he been less remarkable on account of his fidelity and industry, had he taken care to select the weakest arguments of his antagonists, and to render them still weaker by proposing them in an imperfect and unfaithful light, his fame would have been much greater among the friends of Rome than it actually is [2]."

Let us turn then to the work of an author thus candid as a theologian, thus highly endowed as a man.

[1] Bickersteth on Popery, p. 8. [2] Vol. iv. p. 206.

In his treatise in defence of Purgatory, he uses severe language against Calvin, who represents the Fathers as speaking doubtfully concerning that doctrine. "This," he says, "is intolerable hardihood or ignorance; for first, had they never mentioned Purgatory by name, yet their sentiments about it had been sufficiently plain from their distinct statements that the souls of certain believers need relief and are aided by the prayers of the living. Next, there are the clearest passages in the Fathers, in which Purgatory is asserted, *of which I will cite some few.*" Then follow extracts from twenty-two Fathers in evidence; and so he brings his proof to an end, and dismisses that head of his subject. Now will it be believed that in a subsequent chapter, in recounting the errors concerning Purgatory, he enumerates some of the same Fathers, as holding them, nay, holding them in some of the very passages which he had already adduced in proof of the tenet of his Church! He enumerates Origen, St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, Lactantius, and St. Jerome, as apparently contravening or wandering from the Tridentine doctrine. Of these he surrenders Origen altogether; Jerome he exculpates, but rather by means of other extracts than as clearing up what was objectionable in the passage first quoted. As to the rest, he allows that they all "sound erroneous," but says that "they *may* be understood" in an unexceptionable sense; though after all, of one of the two best

meanings which may be put upon their words, he can but pronounce at most that he "neither affirms nor condemns it."

To explain the state of the question, it is necessary to observe, that various early writers speculate on the possibility of fire at the judgment constituting a trial of the integrity of *all* believers, however highly gifted in faith and holiness. This opinion, whatever be its value, differs from the notion of Purgatory, not to mention other respects, in time, place, and subjects; yet certain passages from the Fathers containing it and other private notions, are enumerated by Bellarmine, first as *instances* in his inductive proof, then as *exceptions* to the doctrine thereby established. The only alleviation of this strange inconsistency is that he quotes, not the very same sentences both for and against his Church, but adjoining ones.

Now, do I mean to accuse so serious and good a man as Bellarmine of wilful unfairness in this procedure? No. Yet it is difficult to enter into the state of mind under which he was led into it. However we explain it, so much is clear, that the Fathers are only so far of use in the eyes of Romanists as they prove the Roman doctrines; and in no sense are allowed to interfere with the conclusions which their Church has adopted; that they are of authority when they seem to agree with Rome, of none if they differ. But if I may venture to account in Bellarmine's own person for

what is in the controversy confessedly unfair, I would observe as follows, though what I say may seem to border on refinement.

A Romanist then cannot really argue in defence of his doctrines; he has too firm a confidence in their truth, if he is sincere in his profession, to enable him critically to adjust the due weight to be given to this or that evidence. He assumes his Church's conclusion as true; and the facts or witnesses he adduces are rather brought to receive an interpretation than to furnish a proof. His highest aim is to show the mere consistency of his theory, its possible adjustment with the records of Antiquity. I am not here inquiring how much of high but misdirected moral feeling is implied in this state of mind; certainly as we advance in perception of the Truth, we all of us become less fitted to be controversialists.

If this be the true explanation of Bellarmine's strange error, the more it tends to exculpate him, the more deeply it criminates his system. He ceases to be chargeable with unfairness only in proportion as the notion of the infallibility of Rome is admitted to be the sovereign and engrossing tenet of his communion, the foundation-stone, or (as it may be called) the fulcrum of its theology. I consider, then, that when he first adduces the afore-mentioned Fathers in proof of Purgatory, he was really but interpreting them; he was teaching what they ought to mean,—what *in charity* they

must be supposed to mean,—what they *might* mean, as far as the very words went,—*probably* meant, *considering* the Church so meant,—and might be taken to mean, even if their authors did not so mean, from the notion that they spoke vaguely, and, as children, really meant something besides what they formally said, and that, after all, they were but the spokesmen of the then existing Church, which, though in silence, held that same doctrine which Rome has since defined and published. This is to treat Bellarmine with the same charity with which he has on this supposition treated the Fathers, and it is to be hoped with a nearer approach to the matter of fact. So much as to his first use of them; but afterwards, in noticing what he considers erroneous opinions on the subject, he treats them not as organs of the Church Infallible, but as individuals, and interprets their language by its literal sense, or by the context. The Fathers in question, he seems to say, held as modern Rome holds; for if they did not, they must have dissented from the Church of their own day; for the Church then held as modern Rome holds. And the Church then held as Rome holds now, because Rome is the Church, and the Church ever holds the same. How hopeless then is it to contend with Romanists, as if they practically agreed to our foundation, however much they pretend to it! Ours is Antiquity, theirs the existing Church. Its infallibility is their first principle; belief in it is a deep prejudice quite

beyond the reach of anything external. It is quite clear that the combined testimonies of all the Fathers, supposing such a case, would not have a feather's weight against a decision of the Pope in Council, nor would matter at all, except for the Fathers' sake who had by anticipation opposed it. They consider that the Fathers ought to mean what Rome has since decreed, and that Rome knows their meaning better than they themselves did. That venturesome Church has usurped their place, and thinks it merciful only not to banish outright the rivals she has dethroned. By an act, as it were, of grace, she has determined that when they contradict her, though of no authority in so doing, yet as living in times of ignorance, they are not on the other hand guilty of heresy, but are only heterodox; and she keeps them around her to ask their advice when it happens to agree with her own.

Let us then understand the position of the Romanists towards us; they do not really argue from the Fathers though they seem to do so. They may affect to do so in our behalf, happy if by an innocent stratagem they are able to convert us; but all the while in their own feelings they are taking a far higher position. They are teaching, not disputing or proving. They are interpreting what is obscure in Antiquity, purifying what is alloyed, correcting what is amiss, perfecting what is incomplete, harmonizing what is various. They claim and use all its documents as ministers and

organs of that one infallible Church, which once forsooth kept silence, but since has spoken; which by a divine gift must ever be consistent with itself, and which bears with it its own evidence of Divinity.

I have said enough perhaps to illustrate the subject in hand; yet various instances shall be added, which are noticed by our divines in this controversy.

Stillingfleet supplies us with the following specimens, which must be looked at *as a whole*, as marking the *temper* of Romanism, and its disrespectful bearing towards the Fathers. "If St. Cyprian," he says, "speaks against Tradition, 'it was,' saith Bellarmine, 'in defence of his error, and therefore no wonder if he argued after the manner of erroneous persons.' If he opposeth Stephen, Bishop of Rome, in the business of rebaptization, 'he seemeth,' saith he, 'to have erred mortally in it.' ... If St. Chrysostom saith, 'That it is better not to be present at the Eucharist, than to be present and not receive it,' 'I say,' saith Bellarmine, 'that Chrysostom, as at other times, went beyond his bounds in saying so.' If St. Augustine expound a place of Scripture not to his mind, he tells him roundly, 'He did not thoroughly consider what he said.' Do not these things argue that due respect they had for the Fathers? So long as they think they can make them serve their turns, then 'who but the Fathers?' If they appear refractory, and will not serve as hewers of wood and drawers

of water to them, then, 'who are the Fathers?' It is the Church's judgment they rely on, and not the Fathers. . . Thus the price of the Fathers rises and falls according to their use, like slaves in the market. If yet the Fathers seem to deliver their judgments peremptorily in a matter contrary to the present sense of their Church, then either they speak it 'in the heat of disputation,' or, if not, they were 'contradicted by others as good as they;' if many of them concur, yet, 'it was but their private judgment,' not the sense of the Catholic Church which they delivered. Still we see the rate the Fathers stand at is their agreement with the present Roman Church; if they differ from this, they were men like others, and might be deceived; only the Pope is infallible, or at least the present Roman Church. For if Hilary, Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Cyril, Augustine, and others say, that Christ, when He said, 'Upon this rock will I build my Church,' understood Peter's confession of Himself, saith Maldonate, 'Nothing could be more incongruous than what they say.' . . . The same liberty he takes in very many other places[1]."

Bishop Taylor writes to the same effect in his Dissuasive: "What think we," he asks, "of the saying of Cardinal Cajetan, 'If you chance to meet with any new exposition which is agreeable to the text, &c. although, perhaps, it differs from that which

[1] Stillingfleet, Grounds, i. 5. 19. pp. 137, 138.

is given by the whole current of the Holy Doctors, I desire the readers that they would not too hastily reject it.' And again; 'Let no man, therefore, reject a new exposition of any passage of Scripture, under pretence that it is contrary to what the Ancient Doctors gave.' What think we of the words of Petavius? 'There are many things by the most Holy Fathers scattered, especially St. Chrysostom in his Homilies, which if you would accommodate to the rule of exact truth, they will seem to be void of good sense.' And again; 'There is no cause why the authority of certain Fathers should be objected, for they can say nothing but what they have learned from St. Luke; neither is there any reason, why we should rather interpret St. Luke by them, than those things which they say by St. Luke.'" Presently Taylor adds, "Of late 'knowledge is increased,'—at least many writers think so; and though the ancient interpretations were more honoured than new, yet Salmeron says plainly, 'that the younger doctors are better sighted and more perspicacious.' And the question being about the conception of the blessed Virgin, without original sin, against which a multitude of Fathers are brought: the Jesuit answers the argument with the words in Exodus xxiii. 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to sin[1].'"

[1] Taylor's Dissuasive, part 2, Introd. vol. x. p. 320. Vid. also, Usher's Answer to a Jesuit, ch. i.

The learned controversialists I have been quoting, add the following instances, from such, and so various quarters, as make them fair samples of the system.

Cardinal Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who suffered death during the troubles in King Henry the VIIIth's reign, is a man, as readers of our history know, of no ordinary name. He is supposed to have assisted Henry VIII. in his work against Luther, and while in prison received a Cardinal's hat from the Pope. He surely is as fair a specimen of the Roman controversialist as could be taken. Now in one of his works against Luther, he thus speaks on the subject of Indulgences and Purgatory, "There are many things, about which no question was agitated in the Primitive Church, which, by the diligence of posterity, when doubts had arisen, have now become clear. No orthodox believer, certainly, *now* doubts whether there be a Purgatory. Whoever will read the commentaries of the old Greeks, he will find *no mention*, as I think, or as little as possible, concerning Purgatory. Nor did the Latins, all at once, and without effort, apprehend the truth of this matter. For faith, whether in Purgatory or in Indulgences, was not so necessary in the Primitive Church as now. For then love so burned, that every one was ready to meet death for Christ. Crimes were rare: and such as occurred, were avenged by the great severity of the Canons. Now, however, a good part of

the people would rather burn Christianity itself, than bear the rigour of the Canons; so that it was not without the especial providence of the Holy Spirit, that *after the lapse of so many years*, belief in Purgatory and the use of Indulgences was generally received by the orthodox. As long as there was no care of Purgatory, no one sought for Indulgences. For the consideration for Indulgences depends entirely on it. If you take away Purgatory, what is the use of Indulgences? for we should not need these, but for it. By considering, then, that Purgatory was for some time unknown, and then believed by certain persons, *by degrees*, partly from revelations, partly from the Scriptures, and so at length, that faith in it became firmly and generally received by the orthodox Church, we shall most easily form our view of Indulgences."

Medina, a Spanish Franciscan of the same century, well esteemed for his learning in the Fathers and Councils, when writing upon the subject of Episcopacy, is led to consider the opinion of St. Jerome, who is accused by many of expressing himself incorrectly concerning it. This is not the place to examine that Father's views; Medina does examine them, and, in consequence, charges him with agreeing with the Aerian heretics. Not content with this, he proceeds to bring a similar charge against Ambrose, Augustine, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Ecumenius, and Theophylact. This, in addition to its untenable

nature, is, indeed, a startling accusation in the mouth of one, who, according to the abstract profession of his Church, is bound to direct himself by the judgment of Antiquity. The circumstance of error in a single Father we could bear without any great surprise; but should there be so many of them upon one side, as he supposes in the case before him, perchance we are the heretics, and they the witnesses of Catholic doctrine. To those, however, who rest upon the Church's Infallibility, there is certainly no danger of such a misfortune. Medina, feeling himself in that position, and independent of all the Fathers brought together, thus remarks: "These men were otherwise most holy, and most thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures; yet this opinion of theirs was condemned by the Church, first in Aerius, then in the Waldenses, lastly in Wickliffe." And presently, "From respect to Jerome and those Greek Fathers, this opinion was in their case hushed up, or tolerated; but in the case of heretics, who in many other points also dissented from the Church, it has always been condemned as heretical." It is fair to add that Bellarmine, who quotes this passage to refute it, speaks of it with severity[1].

To the same purpose is the following remark of another Roman writer, quoted by Taylor. "In the old Catholic writers we suffer very many errors, and

[1] De Clericis, i. 15

extenuate and excuse them; and finding out some commentary, we feign some convenient sense, when they are opposed in disputations [1]."

It is not surprising, with these sentiments, that Romanists should have undertaken before now to suppress and correct portions of the Fathers' writings. An edition of St. Austin published at Venice, contains the following most suspicious confession; "Besides the recovery of many passages by collation with ancient copies, we have taken care *to remove whatever might infect the minds of the faithful* with heretical pravity, or turn them aside from the Catholic and orthodox faith [2]." And a corrector of the press at Lyons, of the middle of the 16th century, complains that he was obliged by certain Franciscans to cancel various passages of St. Ambrose, whose works he was engaged upon [3].

The Council of Constance furnishes us with a memorable instance of the same disregard for Antiquity, to which the whole Roman Communion is committed, in the decree by which it formally debars the laity from the participation of the Cup

[1] Taylor's Dissuasive, i. i. 1. vol. x. p. 136.

[2] "In quo, præter locorum multorum restitutionem secundum collationem veterum exemplarium, curavimus removeri illa omnia, quæ fidelium mentes hæreticâ pravitate possent inficere, aut à catholicâ orthodoxâ fide deviare." Vid. Taylor. Diss. Part ii. i. 6. vol. x. p. 497.

[3] "Qui pro auctoritate has omnes paginas dispunxerunt, ut vides, et illas substitui in locum priorum curaverunt, præter omnem librorum nostrorum fidem." Ibid.

in the Lord's Supper. There is no need of entering into the defence put forward by Romanists, as if the Church had a certain discretion committed to her in the Administration of the Sacraments, and used it in this prohibition, as in the substitution of affusion for immersion in Baptism. The question simply is, even allowing this, for argument's sake, is the spirit betrayed in the following language, one of reverence for Antiquity :—

" Whereas," says the Council, " in certain parts of the world, some temerariously presume to affirm, that the Christian people ought to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, under both kinds of bread and wine, and do everywhere make the laity communicate not only in bread but in wine also, and pertinaciously assert that communion should take place after supper, or else not fasting, contrary to the laudable and reasonable custom of the Church, which they damnably endeavour to reprobate as sacrilegious, this present holy General Council of Constance, legitimately assembled in the Holy Ghost, being anxious to preserve the faithful from this error, after mature deliberation of persons most learned both in divine and human law, declares, decrees, and defines, that, though Christ instituted this venerable Sacrament after supper, and administered it to His disciples under both kinds of bread and wine, yet, notwithstanding this, the laudable authority of the sacred Canons and the approved custom of the Church has observed

and observes, that this Sacrament should not be consecrated after supper, nor be received by the faithful unless fasting, except in case of infirmity or other necessity conceded or admitted by right or the Church; and in like manner, that *although in the primitive Church the Sacrament was received by the faithful under both kinds*, yet for the avoiding some dangers and scandals, this custom has been reasonably introduced, that it be received by the consecrating persons under both kinds, and by the laity only under the bread; since it is to be most firmly believed, and in no wise to be doubted, that the entire Body and Blood of Christ is truly contained as well under the bread as under the wine [1]." The primitive Church, we can believe, has authority as the legitimate Expositor of Christ's meaning; she acts not from her own discretion, but from Christ and His Apostles. We communicate in the morning, not in the evening, though He did in the latter, because she, His work and pattern to us, was used to do so. For the same reason we baptize Infants, and exclude the washing the feet from the number of Sacraments, though His own words literally taken command the latter far more strongly than the former observance. But, what is to be thought of a theology which, on its own authority, on mere grounds of expedience, to avoid dangers and scandals, reverses what itself confesses to be the cus-

[1] Perceval on the Roman Schism, pp. 144—146.

tom of that Church which came next to the Apostles?

Such was the conduct of the Council of Constance. Cardinal Cusa justifies its decree in a passage which shall be next quoted. He may be taken as the representative of two great parties in the Church in the fifteenth century. He was present at the Council of Basil, being an upholder of the rights of a General Council above the Pope. Afterwards he joined the Pope who was then censured, and assisted at Florence, but without modifying his former opinions. With this double claim upon our notice, he speaks as follows in defence of the refusal of the cup to the laity. "If the Church, or if the Pope, that is the virtual Church, do expound any evangelical sense contrary to what the current sense and practice of the Catholic Primitive Church did, not that, but this present interpretation must be taken for the way of salvation, for God changes His judgment as the Church does[1]."

Lastly, I quote the words of Cornelius Mussus, Bishop of Bitonto, who assisted at the Council of Trent:—"I for my part, to speak candidly, would

[1] Ep. ii. p. 833, as quoted by Bishop Taylor. (Dissuasive, Works, vol. x. p. 485.) He does not give the Latin in the note, but Stillingfleet (on the Council of Trent, Works, vol. vi. p. 451.) quotes from the same Epistle an equivalent passage: "Scripturas esse ad tempus adaptatas et varie intellectas, ita ut uno tempore secundum currentem universalem Ritum exponerentur, mutato Ritu iterum sententia mutaretur."

rather credit one Pope in matters touching the faith, than a thousand Augustines, Jeromes, or Gregories [1]."

Before concluding, I would briefly remark, that instances such as the foregoing, altogether expose the pretence of some Romanists [2], that the silence of Antiquity on the subject of their peculiarities arises from a *disciplina arcani*, as it has been called, or rule of secrecy, practised in the early Church, which forbad the publication of the more sacred articles of faith to the world at large. For it has now been seen that according to the avowed or implied conviction of their most eminent Divines, there is much actually to censure in the writings of the Fathers, much which is positively hostile to the Roman system. No rule of secrecy could lead honest men to make statements diametrically opposite to their real belief, statements which are now the refuge of those who resist what the Romanists consider the real opinion of the men who made them.

I am led to this remark, because apprehensions have been felt, I would say causelessly, lest those who admit the existence of this primitive rule, or rather usage, were thereby making some dangerous concession to the Romanists; which it cannot be, if, as the latter avow, the Fathers, not merely fail

[1] Stillingfleet. Grounds, i. 5. § 19. p. 137.

[2] Pagi Ann. 118. n. 9.

to mention, but actually contradict the Roman peculiarities. But were they only silent respecting them, so as just to admit of the hypothesis of a rule of secresy such as these apologists would have it, at least this would be inconsistent with Bossuet's boast of the "conditions and restrictions" under which the Church has ever exercised her gift of infallibility. "Far from wishing," he says in a passage already quoted, but which will be now more justly estimated after the specimens since given of his Church's reckless conduct towards the primitive Fathers, "far from wishing to become absolute mistress of her faith, as is laid to her charge, she has on the contrary *done every thing in her power to tie up her own hands, and deprive herself of the means of innovation;* for she not only submits to Scripture, but in order to banish for ever those arbitrary interpretations, which would substitute the whims of man for the word of God, *she hath bound herself to interpret it,* in what concerns faith and morality, *according to the sense of the holy Fathers, from which she professes never to depart.*" That is, she implicitly obeys, an authority which, even on the more favourable supposition, enjoins nothing, and which, as we have found the fact really to be, earnestly protests against the course which she ventures to pursue.

I make one remark more. Enough has been said to show the hopefulness of our own prospects in the controversy with Rome. We have her own

avowal that the Fathers ought to be followed, and again that she does not follow them; what more can we require than her witness against herself which is here supplied us? If such inconsistency is not at once fatal to her claims, which it would seem to be, at least it is a most encouraging omen in our contest with her. We have but to remain pertinaciously and immoveably fixed on the ground of Antiquity; and, as truth is ours, so will the victory be also. We have joined issue with her, and that in a point which admits of a decision,—of a decision, as she confesses, against herself. Abstract arguments, original views, novel interpretations of Scripture, may be met by similar artifices on the other side; but historical facts are proof against the force of talent, and remain where they were when it has expended itself. How mere Protestants, who rest upon no such solid foundation, are to withstand our common adversary, is not so clear, and not our concern. We would fain make them partakers of our vantage ground; but since they despise it, they must take care of themselves, and must not complain if we refuse to desert a position which promises to be impregnable,—impregnable both as against Romanists and against themselves.

LECTURE III.

DOCTRINE OF INFALLIBILITY MORALLY CONSIDERED.

ENOUGH perhaps was said in the last Lecture to show that Romanism, however it may profess a reverence for Antiquity, does not really feel and pay it. There are in fact two elements in operation within the system. As far as it is Catholic and Scriptural, it appeals to the Fathers; as far as it is a corruption, it finds it necessary to supersede them. Viewed in its formal principles and authoritative statements, it professes to be the champion of past times; viewed as an active and political power, as a ruling, grasping, ambitious principle, in a word, what is expressively called Popery, it exalts the will and pleasure of the existing Church above all authority, whether of Scripture or Antiquity, interpreting the one and disposing of the other by its absolute and arbitrary decree.

We must take and deal with things as they are, not as they pretend to be. If we are induced to believe the professions of Rome, and make ad-

vances towards her as if a sister or a mother Church, which in theory she is, we shall find too late that we are in the arms of a pitiless and unnatural relative, who will but triumph in the arts which have inveigled us within her reach. No; dismissing the dreams which the romance of early Church history and the high theory of Catholicism will raise in the guileless and inexperienced mind, let us be sure that she is our enemy, and will do us a mischief when she can. In saying and acting on this conviction, we need not depart from Christian charity towards her. We must deal with her as we would towards a friend who is visited by derangement; in great affliction, with all affectionate tender thoughts, with tearful regret and a broken heart, but still with a steady eye and a firm hand. For in truth she is a Church beside herself, abounding in noble gifts and rightful titles, but unable to use them religiously; crafty, obstinate, wilful, malicious, cruel, unnatural, as madmen are. Or rather, she may be said to resemble a demoniac; possessed with principles, thoughts, and tendencies, not her own, in outward form and in outward powers what God made her, but ruled within by an inexorable spirit, who is sovereign in his management over her, and most subtle and most successful in the use of her gifts. Thus she is her real self only in name, and, till God vouchsafe to restore her, we must treat her as if she were that evil one which governs her. And in saying

this, I must not be supposed to deny that there is any real excellence in Romanism even as it is, or any really excellent men adherents to it. Satan ever acts on a system; various, manifold, and intricate, with parts and instruments of different qualities, some almost purely evil, others so unexceptionable, that in themselves and detached from the end to which all is subservient, they are really "Angels of light," and may be found so to be at the last day. In Romanism there are some things absolutely good, some things only just tainted and sullied, some things corrupted and some things in themselves sinful; but the system itself so called, as a whole, and therefore all parts of it, tend to evil. Of this evil system the main tenet is the Church's infallibility, as on the other hand the principle of that genuine theology out of which it has arisen, is the authority of Catholic Antiquity. In this and the following Lecture, I shall observe upon some of the characteristics of this main error, as we may consider it, viewing it first morally, and then what may be called politically. The points to which I wish to direct attention, as involved in the doctrine of Infallibility, are such as the following: That Romanism considers unclouded certainty necessary for a Christian's faith and hope; That it considers doubt incompatible with practical abidance in the truth; That it aims at forming a complete and consistent theology; That in forming it, it neglects authority, and rests upon

abstract arguments: That it criticizes and disposes of the Christian scheme on antecedent grounds; and that it substitutes a technical and formal obedience for the spirit of love. I notice these peculiarities in order to draw intelligible lines of demarcation between Romanists and ourselves; and first will treat of them in a moral point of view.

1. The doctrine of the Church's Infallibility is made to rest upon the notion that any degree of doubt about religious truth is incompatible with faith, and that an external infallible assurance is necessary to exclude doubt. "Proof[1]," or certainty of the things believed, is secured upon two conditions; if there be a God, "who cannot lie," as the source of Revelation, and if the Church be Infallible to convey it. Otherwise, it is urged, what is called faith is merely opinion, as being but partially or probably certain. To this statement it is sufficient to reply here, that according to English principles, faith has all it needs in having only the former of these two secured to it, in knowing that God is our Creator and Preserver, and that He *may*, if it so happen, have spoken. This indeed is its trial and its praise, so to hang upon the thought of Him, and desire Him, as not to wait till it knows for certain from infallible informants whether or no He has spoken, but to act in the way which

[1] Heb. xi. 1. Bellarm. de Gratiâ, vi. 3.

seems on the whole most likely to please Him. If we are asked, how Faith differs from Opinion, we reply, in its considering His being, governance, and will as a matter of personal interest and importance to us, not in the degree of light or darkness under which it perceives these truths. When we are not personally concerned, even the highest evidence does not move us; when we are concerned, the very slightest is enough. Though we knew for certain that the planet Jupiter were in flames, we should go on as usual; whereas even the confused cry of fire at night rouses us from our beds. Action is the criterion of faith, as determining accurately whether we connect the thought of God with the thought of ourselves, and regard Him otherwise than we regard the solar system. And as well might we say that the man who acts upon a letter from a friend does not believe his friend because he is not infallibly sure the letter is not forged, as deny that such men have real faith as hear the Church and obey, though they have no assurance that in reporting God's words, she cannot err. Nay, doubt may even be said to be implied in a Christian's faith. Not that infallible certainty would take away all trial of our hearts and force us to obey, nor again as if nothing were clearly told us by Revelation, for much is; but that the greater the uncertainty, the fuller exercise there is of our earnestness in seeking the truth, and of our moral sagacity in tracing and

finding it. As reasonably then might fear, despondency, dulness of mind, or heaviness of spirit be judged inconsistent with faith as doubt. Imperfection of every kind, moral and natural, is a trial or temptation, and is met by striving and acting against it. Scripture is full of instances in point as regards faith. It has been remarked, that our Saviour scarcely once declared to inquirers that He was the Christ; though their impatience on many occasions showed how hard they felt it to flesh and blood to act without an infallible assurance. He left them to gather the great truth for themselves how they could, with whatever degree of certainty, sometimes referring them to His miracles, sometimes to the types or prophecies of the Law, sometimes to His forerunner the Baptist, sometimes urging them to make trial of the truth in practice and so to find it. When St. Thomas doubted of His resurrection, far from justifying his demand for an infallible witness, He declared that He was but diminishing His blessedness by giving him a higher evidence of the miracle than he had already received. On one occasion, indeed, He did publicly declare Himself to be the Christ, but, as we shall find, it was not in love but in wrath. It was in answer to the adjuration of the High Priest, whom He forthwith awfully consigned to the destiny of those miserable beings, who being totally estranged from their Maker, do but believe and tremble. And, as is His conduct during His

ministry, such is the uniform doctrine of the whole of Scripture, summed up, as it is, in the expressive words of the Prophet, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, who heareth the voice of His servant, who walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him hope in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God[1]." This is only parallel to what we see in the course of nature; the proofs of the being of a God are not written on the sun and sky, nor the precepts of morality spoken from a Urim and Thummim. To require such definite and clear notices of truth, is to hanker after the Jewish Law, a system of less mysterious information as well as less generous faith.

2. This leads me to notice an important peculiarity of Romanism, to which such a temper gives rise. According to its *theory*, the Church professes to know only what the Apostles knew, to have received just what they delivered, neither more nor less. But in fact, she is obliged to pretend to a complete knowledge of the whole Dispensation, such as the Apostles had not. Unless we know all of any subject we must have difficulties, and where there are difficulties so far there is no infallible knowledge. To know some things infallibly, implies that we know all things. Or, to put the matter more clearly, where there is knowledge of but a portion of a system, one part of what is known is

[1] Isaiah l. 10.

more plain and certain to us than another part, and can be spoken of more confidently; thus the clearness of our view will be indefinitely varied, but there are no degrees in Infallibility. Now partial and incomplete knowledge must be an inseparable attendant on a theology which reveals the wonders of heaven. The human mind cannot measure the things of the Spirit. Christianity is a supernatural gift, originating in the unseen world and only extending into this. It is a vast scheme, running out into width and breadth, encompassing us round about, not embraced by us. No one can see the form of a building but those who are external to it. We are within the Divine Dispensation; we cannot take it in with the eye, ascertain its proportions, pursue its lines, foretell their directions and coincidences, or ascertain their limits. We see enough for practice, but not even as much as this with an equal degree of clearness; but one part more clearly than another. These detached portions of a complicated system necessarily vary in the precision and definiteness with which they come to the mind. That which is set before it in many of its relations is more fully understood and grasped than that which is only just revealed. When the mind knows a certain part of a system, it cannot ascertain the limits of its knowledge; as the eye when fixed on any object cannot determine how much it indirectly sees all around it. Surely the Apostles themselves, though infallibly sure of

the greater truths, could not determine the limits of their infallibility. To know the lesser truths as they knew the main ones, had been to open a fresh field of knowledge beyond, in the way of deduction and implication. It would have been like moving the eye to a new object, which brings it into a new range of vision. Thus, I say, to know all that is revealed with equal clearness, implies that there is nothing not revealed. Agreeably with this anticipation, the Church of Rome in fact is led to profess to know not only infallibly but completely. She begins by claiming the power of infallibly determining whatever the Apostles knew, of accurately stating all such lesser matters as they would not be able to realize to themselves as certain, of rendering equally vivid all those marvellous traces of things invisible which in the first inspired teachers would gradually melt from distinctness in their outlines into dim distance or into minute intricacy of detail. And, in consequence, she is led on from this profession of uniform clearness to a profession of universal knowledge.

This then is a second and not the least pernicious peculiarity of Romanism. It professes to be a complete theology. It arranges, adjusts, explains, exhausts every part of the Divine Economy. It may be said to leave no region unexplored, no heights unattempted, rounding off its doctrines with a neatness and finish which is destructive of many of the most noble and most salutary exercises of mind in

the individual Christian. That feeling of awe and piety which the mysteriousness of the Gospel should excite fades away under this fictitious illumination which is poured over the entire Dispensation. Criticism, we know, is commonly considered fatal to poetical fervour and imagination; and in like manner this technical religion destroys the delicacy and reverence of the Christian mind. So little has actually been revealed to us in a systematic way, that the genuine science of the Gospel, carried to its furthest limits, has no tendency to foster a spirit of rationalism. But Rome would classify and number every thing; she would settle every sort of question, as if determined to detect and compass by the reason what runs out into the next world or is lost in this. Revelation so melts into Providence that we cannot draw the line between them. Miraculous events shade off into natural coincidences, visions into dreams, types into resemblances; Inspiration has before now spoken among Idolaters and Pagans; the Church itself gradually fades away into the world. Whatever subject in religion we examine accurately, we shall find full of difficulties. Whether miracles have ceased, and, if so, at what date? how long Catholic doctrine was preserved from human additions? how far Gospel privileges are extended to separatists? how much must be believed by individuals in order to salvation? what is the state of unbaptized Infants? what amount of temporal

punishment must be set against the sins of accepted Christians? what sort of change takes place in the consecration of the Eucharist? all these are questions which man cannot determine, yet such as these Romanists delight to handle. Not content with what is revealed, they are ever intruding into things not seen as yet, and growing familiar with mysteries; gazing upon the ark of God over boldly and long, till they venture to put out the hand and to touch it. But, not to dwell upon this part of the subject, which is painful, it is sufficiently evident what an opening is given by a theology of so ambitious a character to pride and self-confidence. It has been said that knowledge is power; and at least it creates in us the imagination of possessing it. This is what makes scientific and physical researches so intoxicating; it is the feeling they inspire of perfect acquaintance with the constitution of nature. He who considers himself fully to understand a system, seems to have sway over it. Astronomers can predict the motions of the heavenly bodies, with an accuracy which in their own fancy places them above them. Now religion is the great chastiser of human pride; nor would I say, that however perverted, it ever can cease to be so; yet it is plain that when thus turned into an intellectual science, even polytheism answers such a purpose better than it.

I have been speaking in general language; it will tend to explain my meaning to take an instance

of this venturesome speculativeness in Romanism, and suppression of more reverent, wondering, and expectant thoughts. With this view, let us consider their doctrine of Satisfaction; which I will describe as briefly as the intricate nature of the subject will allow.

No questions in religion are more painfully interesting to the awakened mind than those relating to the forgiveness of its sins. Revelation has answered some of the main obscurities of the subject, but has left others. It asserts the doctrine of everlasting punishment to the finally impenitent, and it proclaims pardon and salvation to all who repent, believe, and obey. Further it declares that the death of Christ upon the cross has put away the wrath of God from us, and reconciled Him to us: that this precious Atonement is applied to every individual on his Baptism, and that it is realized in his soul and body in a peculiar way in the holy Eucharist; lastly, that its virtue flows in various indirect and indefinite ways by means of the ministrations of the Church, to whom also these Sacraments are entrusted. But this is nearly all that is told us. We do not know *how* the death of Christ operates to our salvation; we do not know why it was required, or what is its full design and effect. We do not know what it effects for the heathen; we do not know whether or how it influences the state of Infants dying unbaptized. Coming to questions more nearly interesting us, we

do not know what will be the future destiny, whether of happiness or misery, of the body of baptized persons, who certainly seem to live and die in an unchristian way. We do not know the measure of punishment due for particular sins, or if there be any measure. We do not know how far sins committed after Baptism are forgiven, *i. e.* what permanent disadvantages remain after forgiveness, what diminution of rewards otherwise attainable, or the like. We do not know what the effect of prior services may be, in those who sin deeply, and afterwards repent, but without much subsequent fruit. We do not know how far the Eucharistic rite avails to their pardon, or to whose pardon it avails, and under what circumstances. We do not know how and when the intercession of others operates towards our repentance and pardon. Nor can we cast the balance between the outward advantages and disadvantages of any one individual and his works or failings, or decide upon his state in God's sight. Nor do we know when forgiveness is formally conveyed to individual Christians who have lapsed into sin, whether in this life, or upon death, or during the intermediate state, or at the day of judgment. All these are "secret things with the Lord our God," things not lightly to be spoken of, not dreams of our own, which, as not existing, have no answer, but such as have an answer one way or the other, though we do not know which way, and it is presumptuous to inquire.

Now, while impatience of doubt leads the Protestant of this day to treat all such questions as inherently fanciful, creations of the mind, and not questions of fact, the same impatience leads the Romanist to answer them.

Their answers are of the following kind [1].

They consider with us that Baptism is a plenary and absolute remission of all sin whatever, original and actual, with which the baptized person is laden. Then, as to sin committed after Baptism, they proceed to divide it into two kinds, venial and mortal. Mortal sins are such as throw the soul out of a state of grace, and deserve eternal punishment, such as murder, adultery, or blasphemy. Venial sins deserve a punishment short of eternal, a punishment, (that is,) in time, or before the day of judgment. These are such either in *kind* or *degree;* an idle word, excessive laughter differ in *kind* from perjury or adultery; but a sudden and passing anger is but in *degree* different from indulged and lasting wrath, which is mortal. For venial sins there is no formal means of Absolution, or Sacrament, dispensed by the Church; their punishment, whatever it is, but any how at most temporal only, remains to be endured, or to be averted

[1] "Tum Velleius, fidenter sane, ut solent isti, nihil tam verens, quam ne dubitare aliquâ de re videretur, tanquam modo ex Deorum concilio, et ex Epicuri intermundiis descendisset; Audite, inquit, non futiles commentitiasque sententias, &c."—Cic. de Nat. Deor. i. 8.

by certain expedients, some of which shall presently be noticed.

Mortal sin deserves not a mere temporal retribution, though this it incurs also, but an eternal punishment; in other words, it incurs a punishment both before and after the day of judgment. Upon repentance the eternal punishment is forgiven, and that through the Sacrament of Penance, and then the temporal punishment alone remains, which that Sacrament does not reach. It seems then, that according to the Roman doctrine, a soul in a state of grace, though rescued from all eternal consequences of his sins, or from any hazard in the day of judgment, remains liable to a certain temporal punishment in two ways, for venial sins and for mortal sins forgiven as to their eternal consequences. This distinction between the temporal and eternal consequences of sin, its advocates illustrate in David, who, though expressly forgiven his adultery and murder, so far as not to "die," yet had a heavy temporal chastisement put upon him in this life. They consider there is a certain fixed correspondence between sins of whatever kind and the punishment of them: so that every Christian will have a definite quantity of punishment to undergo before the coming of Christ to judge the world and to take him to his eternal rest.

The time of suffering this punishment, or of expiating his sins in their temporal respects, is the interval between their commission and the

day of judgment; and since each sin has its specific measure of suffering, if he does not exhaust it in this life, he must complete it in the intermediate state, and the more he sustains here the less he will have to sustain there. And, since this life is a state of grace, and suffering here is far less severe than suffering in the intermediate state (*i. e.* in Purgatory) it is his interest, as far as may be, to expiate his sins here. Hence the utility of penances, either imposed by the Church or voluntary in the offender, with a view of satisfying the punishment due to his sins. Hence too the advantage of abounding in good works, which in the regenerate man, besides availing to eternal life, are considered to have an inherent efficacy in the expiation of sin. A like efficacy, but proceeding immediately from the great Atoning Sacrifice, is considered to lie in the Eucharistic Offering.

Even this is not the limit to which they carry their systematic account of the pardon of sin. After all appliances, whether by penances, good works, or the holy Sacrifice of the Altar, it is considered that the multitude of Christians leave this life with a considerable debt of temporal punishment standing against them, and are certainly destined to suffer in Purgatory. On the other hand it is conjectured that certain great Saints leave this world after an overplus of temporal suffering, whatever their sins may have been. Men like Jeremiah or John the Baptist, sanctified as they were from their mother's

womb, singularly holy and useful, and uniformly suffering until their martyrdom, have more than satisfied divine justice for such venial offences as have overtaken them, and render up to God together with their obedience a store of sufferings which have, as far as they are concerned, answered no purpose. Considering then the virtue and properties of that mysterious Communion which exists between all Christians, that they are all but one body, and have all things common, it is concluded that what is done or suffered over and above by the Saints, may be put to the score of the souls in Purgatory; and that the Church, represented in her ministers and especially in the Pope, is the agent in this sacred interchange. To the Pope, then, is committed the key of this treasurehouse of the merits of the Saints, together with those of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he dispenses it according to his discretion. This benefit is called an Indulgence, which is an application of the merits of the Saints in lieu of a certain penance in this life or of an equivalent suffering in Purgatory.

The importance of the subject under review, must be my excuse for the length of what has been but an illustration. Enough perhaps has now been said to show the bold exactness of Romanism in determining theological points, and this in consequence of its claim of Infallibility, which leads it to be positive and complete, so soon as it mentions them at all.

3. Another and distinct evil, and of a very serious character, which follows from the doctrine of Infallibility, is of the following kind. The practice of systematizing necessarily leads to a decision concerning the relative importance of doctrines. Every system has its principal and its secondary parts, and views one in connection with another, as bearing together with more or less influence upon the whole, or upon some main portion which it considers essential and supreme. Of course religion has its greater and its lesser truths; but it is one thing to receive them so far as Scripture declares them to be so, quite another to decide about them for ourselves by the help of our own reasonings. However, it is not wonderful that Romanism should claim authority over the work of its own hands; it has framed the system and it proceeds to judge of it. But this is not all. They who are resolved that the Divine counsels and appointments should be cognisable by the human intellect, are naturally tempted to assign some visible and intelligible object as the scope of the whole Dispensation; or, in other words, they make in some shape or other worldly expediency the measure of its excellence and wisdom. I do not say they are forced, but they are easily betrayed into doing this. They ask what is the use of this doctrine, what the actual harm of that error; as if the experience of results were neces-

sary before condemning the one and sanctioning the other. This, as is obvious, is strikingly instanced in the religion popular among us at the present day, in which only so much of the high doctrines of the Gospel is admitted, as is seen and felt to tend to our moral improvement. According to it, the most striking and persuasive proof of the divine origin of Christianity, lies in the harmonious adjustment and correspondence, and the evident meaning of its parts. One of the ablest defenders of this view, at the close of a popular Essay, even ventures to speak as follows: "It has been my object," he says, "to draw the attention of the reader to the internal structure of the religion of the Bible, first, because I am convinced that no man in the unfettered exercise of his understanding can fully and cordially acquiesce in its pretensions to divine inspiration, until he sees in its substance that which accords both with the character of God and with the wants of man; and secondly, because any admission of its divine original, if unaccompanied with a knowledge of its principles, is absolutely useless[1]." Here, unless I am unjust to the writer, it is plainly asserted that the understanding has a right to claim an insight into the meaning and drift of the matter of Revelation; nay, that faith is not available unless ac-

[1] Erskine's Internal Evidence.

companied by this knowledge; principles surely which would have justified Abraham when called from his native country, to have refused to go, till he was told whither he was being carried. Yet such principles are now in repute; and much is popularly said about the beauty of the Christian system, the unity of its aim, the simplicity of its contrivance for the conversion of the soul, its originality, its correlative and corresponding portions, and the manifestation of the divine character contained in it. Such is the main subject of the Treatise to which I have been referring, and the same views are repeated again and again in the Sermons [1] of a Divine of the sister Establishment, who is never to be mentioned without respect and sympathy. Such is the popular Protestantism of the day. Now one might have hoped that Romanism would have been clear of the fault into which the rival system has been betrayed. One might have trusted beforehand to its very propensity to enlarge on the secrets of heaven, as at least a guarantee that no one end, and still less a visible end, would be proposed by its controversialists as a measure of gospel excellence and truth. Yet, strange to say, as if to show the agreement of temper and character between the one and the other creed as actually administered, we find one of the latest advocates of Rome claiming the privilege of criticising and applauding the

[1] Dr. Chalmers' Sermons at the Tron Church.

Gospel as a *system*. He observes that there is something in Romanism "beautifully contrasted, to the eye of the philosopher, with the manifest imperfections of" what he calls the Protestant "system. There is a natural and obvious beauty in the simplicity of this basis, which at once gives stability and unity to conviction." In another place he observes, "the end of every rule and law, and consequently of every rule of Faith," is "to bring men into a unity of principle and action;" that "the rule proposed by others is proved by experience to lead to exactly opposite results; in other words, that it removes men farther from that union towards which it must be intended to bring them, for it leads them to the most contradictory opinions, professing to be supported and proved by precisely the same principle of Faith;" whereas "the principle" of Romanism is "fully equal to those objects for which the rule was given[1]." Now, I am far from denying there is soundness and truth in the argument, as used both by the Roman and the Scotch Divines; the process is sound when used under limitations, the conclusion is in a measure true. But both the one party and the other, evidently put forth their respective views as convincing and decisive proofs, as independent and substantive evidences; and that they are not such, is shown, if in no other way, at least in this,

[1] Dr. Wiseman's Lectures, vol. i. pp. 17. 76.

that they are adduced by their respective advocates in order to prove contradictories. Now what leads to opposite conclusions is no real test of truth. However, we are here concerned merely with the fact of this mischievous peculiarity of Romanism, which it has in common with some other modern systems, its subjecting divine truth to the intellect, and professing to take a complete survey and to make a map of it.

4. One more remark shall be made, though as it is often urged in controversy, a few words on the subject will suffice. Romanism by its pretence of Infallibility, lowers the standard and quality of Gospel obedience as well as impairs its mysterious and sacred character; and this in various ways. When religion is reduced in all its parts to a system, there is hazard of something earthly being made the chief object of our contemplation instead of our Maker. Now Romanism classifies our duties and their rewards, the things to believe, the things to do, the modes of pleasing God, the penalties and the remedies of sin, with such exactness, that an individual knows (so to speak) just where he is upon his journey heavenward, how far he has got, how much he has to pass, and his duties become a matter of calculation. It provides us with a sort of graduated scale of devotion and obedience, and engrosses our thoughts with the details of a mere system, to a comparative forgetfulness of its professed Author. But it is evident that the purest

religious services are those which are done, not by constraint, but voluntarily, as a free offering to Almighty God. There are certain duties which are indispensable in all Christians, but their limits are undefined, to try our faith and love. For instance, what portion of our worldly substance we should devote to charitable uses, or in what way we are to fast, or how we are to dress, or whether we should remain single, or what revenge we should take upon our sins, or what amusements are allowable, or how far we may go into society; these and similar questions are left open by Inspiration. Some of them are determined by the Church, and suitably, with a view to public decency and order, or by way of recommendation and sanction to her members. A command from authority is to a certain point a protection to our modesty, though beyond this it would but act as a burden. For instance, at this very time, when the practice of fasting has become so unpopular, in spite of the Church's rule, it would be a great comfort to individuals who wish to observe it, yet dread singularity in so doing, did the custom exist, as I believe it did once, of pastoral letters at the beginning of Lent, enforcing it from authority. But in most matters of the kind, certainly when questions of *degree* are concerned, the best rule seems to be to leave individuals free, lest what otherwise would be a spontaneous service in the more zealous, should become a compulsory enactment upon all. This is

the true Christian liberty, not the prerogative of obeying God, or not, as we please, but the opportunity of obeying Him more strictly without formal commandment. In this way, too, the delicacy and generous simplicity of our obedience is consulted, as well as our love put to trial. Christ loves an open-hearted service, done without our contemplating or measuring what we do, from the fulness of affection and reverence, while the mind is fixed on its Great Object without thought of itself. Now express commands lead us to reflect upon and estimate our advances towards perfection, whereas true faith will mainly contemplate its deficiencies, not its poor attainments, whatever they be. It does not like to realize to itself what it does; it throws off the thought of it; it is carried on and reaches forward towards perfection, not counting the steps it has ascended, but keeping the end steadily in its eye, knowing only that it is advancing, and glorying in each sacrifice or service which it is allowed to offer, as it occurs, not remembering it afterwards. But in Romanism there would seem to be little room for this unconscious devotion. Each deed has its price, every quarter of the land of promise is laid down and described. Roads are carefully marked out, and such as would attain to perfection are constrained to move in certain lines, as if there were a science of gaining heaven. Thus the Saints are cut off from the Christian multitude by certain fixed duties, not rising out of it by the

continuous growth and flowing forth of services which in their substance pertain to all men. And Christian holiness, in consequence, loses its freshness, vigour, and comeliness, being frozen (as it were) into certain attitudes, which are not graceful except when unstudied.

The injury resulting to the multitude from the same circumstance, is of a different but not less serious nature. While, of those who aim at the more perfect obedience, many are made self-satisfied and still more formal, the mass of Christians are either discouraged from attempting or countenanced in neglecting it. It requires very little knowledge of human nature, to perceive how readily a doctrine will be embraced and followed which sanctions a secondary standard of holiness, or which allows the performance of certain duties to make up for the disregard of others. If, indeed, there is one offence more than the rest characteristic of Romanism, it is this, its indulging the carnal tastes of the multitude of men, setting a limit to their necessary obedience, and absolving them from the duty of sacrificing their whole lives to God. And this serious deceit is in no small degree the necessary consequence of that completeness and minuteness in its theology to which the doctrine of Infallibility gives rise.

The foregoing remarks are not intended as any sufficient discussion of the subject under consider-

ation, but are made with a view of discriminating between Romanism and our own creed. In the former Lectures it was observed that the abstract and professed principles of both systems were often the same, but that in practice, the question of the Church's Infallibility created a wide and serious difference between them. We now see, in a measure, in what this difference consists, viz., in Romanism adopting a minute, technical, and imperative theology, which is no part of Revelation, and which produces a number of serious moral evils, which is shallow in philosophy, as professing to exclude doubt and imperfection, and dangerous to the Christian spirit, as encouraging us to ask for more than is given us, as fostering irreverence and presumption, confidence in our reason, and a formal or carnal view of Christian obedience. What further evils arise from the political character of these same peculiarities, shall be reserved for a separate Lecture.

LECTURE IV.

DOCTRINE OF INFALLIBILITY POLITICALLY CONSIDERED.

If the object of Rome be to teach moral Truth in its highest or purest form, like a prophet or philosopher, intent upon it more than upon those whom she addresses, and by the very beauty of holiness, and the unconscious rhetoric of her own earnestness, drawing up souls to her, rather than by any elaborate device, certainly she has failed in that end, as was shown in my last Lecture. But if her one and supreme end is to rule the human mind, if man is the object of her thoughts and efforts, and religion but the means of approaching him, if earth is to be the standard, and heaven the instrument, then we must confess that she is most happy in her religious system. What is low in the scale of moral truth, may be the perfection of worldly wisdom; or rather, principles of action which stand first in the school of rhetoric, or politics, are neces-

sarily unworthy the ethical teacher. Now the Church of Rome *is* a political power; and, if she stunts, or distorts the growth of the soul in spiritual excellence, it is because, whether unconsciously or not, she has in view political objects, visible fruits, temporal expediency, the power of influencing the heart, as the supreme aim and scope of her system; because she considers unity, peace, the public confession of the truth, sovereignty, empire, the one practical end for which the Church is formed, the one necessary condition of those other and unknown benefits, whatever these be, which lie beyond it in the next world. I am now to illustrate this peculiarity; and in order that there may be no mistake, I will briefly say what I am to do. I do not attempt to prove that Romanism is a political power; so well known a fact may be taken for granted; but I wish to show that those same principles, involved in the doctrine of Infallibility, which distinguish it from our own creed, morally, conduce to that special political character, which also distinguishes it from our own; that, what is morally a disadvantage, is a political gain: I mean their neglect of the Fathers, their abstract reasonings, and their attention to system.

1. Now, first, their political temper is the cause of their treating the Ancient Fathers with the rudeness and recklessness which has been instanced. Rome acts, like men of keen and impetuous minds,

in their dealings with the old or infirm; she supersedes them because they are hard of hearing, are slow to answer, are circuitous in their motions, and go their own way to work. The most vigorous and commanding intellects, through the interposing medium of centuries, will pour but a feeble and uncertain ray, compared with their original lustre; and Rome considers it better to supersede them with fresh luminaries, than doubtingly and painfully to use them. Emergencies have happened, notions have been circulated, changes have been effected in the Christian Church, which were not contemplated, even in fancy, and can but be indirectly met by the Fathers;—which, moreover, as creating exceptions to some general rules, and obliterating exceptions to others, have given their writings an interpretation, which they were never intended to bear. Thus while the highest truths remain in them immutable, to develope and apply them duly in particulars, is the work of much delicacy, and gives an opening to ingenious perversions of their meaning. Here, then, is a second reason why Romanists have been jealous of the Fathers, over and above the weakness of their own cause. They have dreaded the range and complication of materials thus made the body of proof, which from the nature of the case might as easily be made a handle for the errors of others, as a touchstone of their own. Bent upon action, not speculation, they

are unwilling to allow to heretical sophistry the opportunities of so large a field, and are ready to go great lengths to hinder it.

The difficulty in question is ours as well as theirs, but we do not make it a difficulty. We, for our part, have been taught to consider that faith in its degree as well as conduct, must be guided by probabilities, and that doubt is ever our portion in this life. We can bear to confess that other systems have their unanswerable arguments in matters of detail, and that we are but striking a balance between difficulties existing on both sides; that we are following as the voice of God, what on the whole we have reason to think such. We are not bent (to God be the praise!) on proselyting, organizing, and ruling as the end of life and the *summum bonum* of a Christian community, but have brought ourselves to give our testimony "whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear," and then to leave the matter to God. And, while we are keen and firm in action, we would rather do so according to the occasion, and because it is right to be so, than as connecting our separate efforts into one whole, and contemplating ulterior measures. We would rather act as a duty towards God, the Great Author and Object of their faith, than with unclouded and infallible apprehension of the subject-matter which He sets before us, with a vigorous will, creating for ourselves those realities which the external world but faintly adumbrates,

but which we know we ought to discern in it. Those who are thus minded, will be patient under the inconveniences of an historical controversy. Perceiving that on the whole facts point to certain definite conclusions, and not to their contraries, they will act upon those conclusions unhesitatingly; illuminate what, though true, is obscure, by acting upon it; call upon others to do the same; and leave them to God if they will refuse. But it will be otherwise with the man of ardent political temper, and prompt and practical habits, the sagacious and aspiring man of the world, the scrutinizer of the heart, and conspirator against its privileges and rights. Such a one will understand that the multitude requires a strong doctrine; that the argument "it is because it is," a hundred times repeated has more weight with them than the most delicate, ably connected, and multiplied processes of proof; and that, (as is undeniable), investigations into the grounds of our belief, do but blunt and enfeeble the energy of those who are called upon to act. He will feel all this, and instead of opening himself to its influence, so far only as Revelation has sanctioned, and dispensing with inquiry within the exact limits in which it is mercifully superseded, he will impatiently complete what he considers to have been left imperfect. He will not be content to take moral truth as it comes to him; but he will drug it, as vintners do their wines, to suit the palate of the many. Accordingly, I could

almost believe that the advocates of Romanism would easily be reconciled to the loss of all the Fathers, (should such a mischance happen), as thinking with a barbarian conqueror, that as far as they agreed with Rome, they were superfluous, and where they disagreed, dangerous. Certainly it would much simplify the theory of their religion to be rid of them. Of course I speak only of hardened controversialists, not of Romanists in general, among whom, I doubt not, are many whose names are written in heaven, minds as high, as pure, and as reverential as any of those old Fathers, whose writings are in question; loyally attached to them, jealous of their honour, in that same noble English spirit, as it may be called, which we have already seen exemplified in Bishop Bull. I am but speaking of the Papist as found on the stage of life, and amid the excitement of controversy, stripped of those better parts of his system, which are our inheritance as well as his; and so contemplating him, surely I may assert without breach of charity, that he would, under circumstances, destroy the Fathers' writings, as he actually does disparage their authority,—just as he consents to cut short dispute, by substituting the Vulgate for the original inspired Text, and by lodging the gift of Infallibility in the Pope rather than in a General Council.

2. The same feeling which leads the Roman disputant to shrink from a fair appeal to the Fathers,

however loudly he may profess it in the outset and in general terms, will also cause him to prefer abstract proof to argument from fact. Facts, indeed, are confessedly troublesome, and must be avoided as much as possible, by any one who is bound by his theory to decide as well as dispute, much more if he professes himself infallible. Those who have to command, should either give no reason for their movements, or reasons which cannot successfully be gainsayed. To appeal to facts is to put the controversy out of their own hands, and to lodge the decision with the world at large. If they must argue, they should confine themselves to abstract proofs and to matters of opinion. Abstract arguments are but an expression of their will. Besides, they lie in very little compass, and any one can learn and use them, whether to remind and instruct himself, or in disputation. Not without reason, then, are the proofs of the Romanists such as we actually find them in the controversy,—antecedent inferences from premisses but partially true, or parallels and analogies assumed, or large principles grounded on single instances, or fertile expositions of single texts of Scripture. Now here let me be clearly understood. I do not say that such reasoning is necessarily, inconsequential, or unfair. Of several independent meanings, which may be given to the sacred text, each may be separately possible, though one alone can be the true one. It does not follow, then, that a certain interpretation is not

sound, because neither the wording nor the context force us into it. Principles do often lie hid in single instances, resemblances argue connexions, and abstract truths admit of development. I merely say that such a line of proof, whatever its merits, is safe,—is necessary for the Romanist. When Innocent III., for instance, claimed to reign over the kings of the earth, because the sun ruled the day, and the moon the night, his argument might be invalid, but it might also be valid, and could not be confuted. King John, or the Emperor, might refuse to acknowledge it; but it was enough for the Pope that he felt it himself. But on the other hand, had he, in proof of his pretensions, alleged that St. Peter trod upon Nero's neck, he might have still made and enforced them, but he would have unnecessarily subjected himself to an external tribunal. Whether, then, abstract arguments be sound or not, in the particular case, at least, they are unanswerable, and for that reason are peculiarly necessary for a power that claims infallibility. But, after all, serviceable as they may be, in religious controversy, they are plainly presumptuous, when they depend on nothing beyond themselves. Religion is too serious a subject to be made rest on our own inferences and examinations, when there is any other possible way; and much less when we are settling authoritatively the religion of others. It is quite fair, indeed, or rather a duty to deduce truths from Scripture for our-

selves, when we have no other guide; but to enforce such deductions upon others is plainly unjustifiable. The case is different where we have clear authority, beyond our own, for such inferences. Thus, sanctioned by our Saviour, we may, or rather are bound to discern the doctrine of the Resurrection in God's words to Moses in the bush; and under St. Matthew's guidance to preach the Immaculate Conception from the seventh chapter of Isaiah, whatever becomes of the criticism on the Hebrew word conveying the doctrine. Again, the unanimous tradition of the early Church authorizes us to maintain and enforce the doctrine that Christ is the Son of God, in the sense of His being consubstantial with Him. On the other hand, a man may, indeed, fairly and profitably argue from the eighth chapter of Genesis that the curse on the earth was reversed after the flood, and yet he is not allowed to consider it a matter of faith. I say this for fear of misconception; and now, for the sake of definiteness, let me illustrate the point in hand,—which I will do from the same general head of doctrine to which I drew attention in my last Lecture, the doctrine of Indulgences.

This doctrine, as drawn out by Bellarmine, will be found to be as gratuitous in its proof, as it is in itself untrue. Bellarmine begins by proving, that "there is in the Church a treasure of the satisfactions of Christ and the Saints, which is applicable to those who, after the remission of the

guilt in the Sacrament of Penance, are still liable to the payment of temporal punishment." With this purpose he lays down certain propositions; first, that "to the good deeds of just men a double value or price is assignable, viz., of desert and of satisfaction." For instance, it seems that the grace of charity at once recommends us favourably to God, and tends to make up for former offences; and it performs each of these functions distinctly and completely. He quotes Scripture in proof, as the text in Tobit iv., "Almsgiving delivers *from all sin*, and *from death*," and St. Chrysostom and St. Cyprian to the same effect; and, on the other hand, our Lord's words, "Receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world, *for I was an hungred and ye gave Me meat*," &c. And to show that *one and the same act* may be both expiatory and meritorious, he maintains that good deeds are capable of a twofold quality,—they are painful, and they are fruits of love; considered as fruits of love they are pleasing to God; considered as painful they are a compensation for past sin. Again, he refers to the parallel of fasting and prayer; in a word, of all penitential exercises, which, in St. Cyprian's language, tend not only to gain "*pardon* for the regenerate, but a *crown*," to blot out past sin, and to obtain a heavenly reward. The same doctrine might be argued from the instance of Intercession, which does good to others while it is in itself pleasing to Almighty God.

Again, in human affairs the same acts sometimes gain both a return of payment, and a reward. As a soldier gains at once pay and honour by his service, so the Christian Evangelist at once is "worthy of his hire," yet receives "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Moreover, that the punishment of sin is paid off by measure, he argues from the words of Moses [1],—"according to his fault, by a certain number" of stripes; whereas reward plainly goes on a distinct principle.

His next proposition is that "a good work, considered as deserving, cannot be applied to another; but can, considered as a satisfaction." The first part of this proposition he almost takes for granted, there being a contradiction in the idea that the excellence and desert of one man should be the excellence of another. The latter part is proved from the nature of a debt, which we all know one person can pay for another.

After laying down, in the third place, that "there is in the Church an infinite and inexhaustible treasure of Satisfactions, from the sufferings of Christ;" he proceeds to maintain "that to this treasure of overflowing satisfactions pertain also the sufferings of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of all other Saints, who have suffered more than their sins" (in a temporal way) "required." He proves it, because, the Virgin Mary, having no actual sin, needed no satis-

[1] Deut. xxv. 2.

factions for herself, and yet suffered much. The same may be said in their respective measure of St. John the Baptist, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and Ascetics.

Having in this way proved the existence of a Treasure of Satisfactions for the temporal punishment of sins, he proceeds after the same method to show that the Church is the dispenser of it to individuals; but enough, surely, has already been said. He does not even attempt to detect his doctrine in the writings of the Fathers.

3. Thus the practice of abstract reasoning, as well as the neglect of the Fathers, are measures of political expediency in Romanism;—the same will be found to be the case as regards the completeness and consistency of its system. It is not only the necessary result, as has already been observed, but it is also the main evidence of its Infallibility.

Rome claims to be infallible; she dispenses with the Fathers, and relies upon abstract reasoning, because she has this special gift; but how does she prove she has it? To speak simply, she does not prove it at all. At least, she does not prove it argumentatively, but she acts upon the assumption, she acts as if she were infallible, and in this way persuades the imaginations of men into a belief of her really being so. Perhaps it may be asked, why she formally *claims* to be infallible at all, since she cannot prove it—why she is not satisfied with acting upon it? And it may be urged with some plausibility at

first sight, that this *is* the practice of orthodox Protestantism, (as it is called) which imposes dogmatic creeds and anathematizes dissentients as well as Romanism, and so really exercises an infallibility, which it evades the difficulty of maintaining in words. As far as this remark is aimed against ourselves, it will be answered in its place; at present let us confine ourselves to the subject of Romanism. I answer then, that it is true; nothing is gained to the intellect, rather something is lost by this venturous claim; but much is gained thereby as regards impression, and Rome is content to sacrifice reason to secure practical influence. Men act, not because they are convinced, but because they feel; the doctrine in question appeals to their imagination not to their intellect. The mind requires an external guide; Protestantism, in its so-called orthodox forms, furnishes one indeed, but is afraid to avow it. Romanism avows it, and that in the most significant and imposing manner. It uses the doctrine of Infallibility as a sort of symbol or strong maxim bringing home to the mind the fact that the Church is the divinely appointed keeper and teacher of the truth. This may be illustrated by our Saviour's mode of teaching. He said, "Whoso shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Now, without daring to limit or impair this sacred precept, or assuming the power of determining what it means, or why it is so worded, so much at first

sight is conveyed in the sentence, whatever else is contained in it, a great principle, the duty of meekness expressed typically or emblematically. Christ has the prerogative of choosing His own words, and has His own deep scope in them, and an aptness in the very letter; if Rome tries to imitate Him in His mode of speech, it is without His permission or the ability to do so. Yet there seems such an attempt in her doctrine of Infallibility; it symbolizes and brings out strongly, as in a figure, the office of the Church as the one appointed teacher, and that, in ages of the Gospel when the prevalence of licence and free inquiry has called for some forcible protest in behalf of Revelation. It is an effort, though presumptuous and unwarranted, as well as founded to error, to stem the tide of unbelief. It scarcely then affects to produce a formal proof of its own truth, being rather a dogma serviceable in practice, though extravagant in theory, as legal fictions, such as "the king can do no wrong," which vividly express some great and necessary principle, yet are not subject to argumentative proof. Nor does it require any serious argument to recommend such a doctrine to the multitude. The human mind wishes to be rid of doubt in religion; and a teacher who claims infallibility is readily believed on his simple word. We see this constantly exemplified in the case of individual pretenders among ourselves; in Romanism the Church pretends to it. And probably this is not the least persuasive argu-

ment to a Romanist in behalf of the Infallibility of Rome, that she alone of all Churches dare claim it; as if a secret instinct and involuntary misgivings restrained those rival communions, which go so far towards affecting it [1].

Under these circumstances, all that is incumbent on the Church of Rome by way of proof of her pretensions, is to act as if she were infallible, to act with the decision and uniformity which such a claim requires. Her consistent carrying out of her assumed principle forms a sufficient argument that she has a right to it. Here then that diversified, minute, and finished system of doctrine which I have already spoken of, dangerous as it is in its

[1] "It then remains, that Church can only be
The guide, which owns unfailing certainty;
Or else you slip your hold, and change your side,
Relapsing from a necessary guide.
But this annexed condition of the crown,
Immunity from errors, you disown;
Here then you shrink, and lay your weak pretensions down.
For petty royalties you raise debate,
But this unfailing universal state
You shun, nor dare succeed to such a glorious weight.
And for that cause those promises detest,
With which our Saviour did His Church invest;
But strive to evade, and fear to find them true,
As conscious they were never meant for you;
All which the mother Church asserts her own,
And with unrivalled claim ascends the throne," &c.

Dryden, *Hind and Panther*, Part ii.

own excess to the simplicity and sanctity of the Christian, subserves her political purposes. It is but fulfilling her theory; it is but making a show of doing what she professes. Had she the gift of Infallibility, her various judgments, however unpremeditated, would be consistent with each other; she acts then as false witnesses are obliged to do, dresses up a statement in hopes that the artificial show of consistency will be taken in evidence of truth. But, besides this, there is that in the very appearance of order and system which impresses us with the notion that something more than accidental and foreign causes are concerned in their production. The regularity of nature, for instance, has led certain philosophers to ascribe it, not to an external design, but to an innate life and reality as its principle; and, in like manner, the orderly system of Rome serves to impress the imagination as if it were the ever-acting energy of her Infallibility, instead of a mere theology framed with a studied attempt at completeness and consistency. And hence it happens, that the further her pretended revelations are carried, the more minutely she investigates, and the more boldly she decides, in short, the more she outrages common sense and reason by her extreme audacity and peremptoriness, the more successful are her attempts upon the heart and the imagination of the many. She developes her system till it seems self-supported, each part answering for another, and her

very claim, as I have said, guaranteeing her right to make it. Moreover, she has had the address so to complete the revealed notices of truth, as thereby to increase her own influence. It is admitted that some of the most interesting questions to the human mind, as the state of the soul immediately upon death, are left in obscurity by Almighty God. Here Romanism comes in and contrives to throw the mind upon the Church, as the means by which its wants may be supplied, and as the object of its faith and hope, and thus makes her the instrument of a double usurpation, as both professing to show how certain objects may be attained, and next as presenting herself as the agent in obtaining them.

It would be too large a work to illustrate these remarks adequately from the Roman theology, and it has often been done already. Two or three instances may suffice as a specimen. For example: there is no plenary absolution of sin under the Gospel, such as Baptism is, after Baptism, until the day of Judgment; Romanism adds the doctrines of Penance, Purgatory, and Indulgences. Christ is the Saviour from the eternal consequences of sin; Christ in His saints is, according to Rome, the Saviour from the temporal. In Baptism His merits are applied; in Indulgences the merits of the Saints. He saves from hell; the Virgin Mary rescues from Purgatory. His Sacrifice on the Cross avails for the sins of the world; His Sacrifice

in the Mass for the sins of the Church. Again, there are six precepts of the Church, three counsels, twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost, six sins against the Holy Ghost, seven works of mercy, seven deadly sins, four sins which cry for vengeance, four receptacles of souls departed. There is one Sacrament for infancy, another for childhood, a third as food for mature age, a fourth for spiritual sickness, and a fifth for the increase of mankind, a sixth for their government in society, and a seventh for death. I am not condemning the principle itself of so arranging what is divinely given us; it is only when it is applied in excess or without foundation, as it is by the Church of Rome, that it is reprehensible. And, without being able to draw the line between its use and abuse, yet we may clearly see that in her case it actually does subserve her ambitious and secular views.

One more instance shall be given from a modern Irish work, published "with the approbation of Superiors," for the direction of the Christian Doctrine and Purgatorian Societies, and which contains an account of the Indulgences granted by various Popes to those Societies, and to all the faithful, and in particular to the Province of Leinster. This account, of which the following are extracts, illustrate that two-fold character of Romanism described in the last and present Lecture, which is so foreign at once to Antiquity and to our own communion, viz. its lowering the dignity and perfection of mo-

rals,—its limiting by defining our duties,—in order to indulge human weakness, and to gain influence by indulging it. For instance: "The prayers" it is observed, "usually said to gain an Indulgence, are 'the Lord's Prayer,' 'Hail Mary,' and 'Glory be to the Father,' *repeated five times*, in honour of the five most adorable wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whence all grace, merit, and indulgence proceed to our souls, and *one Pater and Ave* for the pious intentions of the sovereign Pontiff and for the wants of the Church."

"A plenary Indulgence is granted on the first Sunday of each month to all the faithful of these Dioceses, who approach the Holy Sacrament, visit any of the Parochial Churches, and devoutly pray for the propagation of the Catholic Faith, and for the other pious intentions of the sovereign Pontiff." "The Indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines (40 days) is granted *each time* to those who devoutly recite the theological acts of faith, hope, and charity; *and if daily recited*, a plenary Indulgence once a month, applicable to the souls of the faithful departed, provided they approach the Holy Sacraments of Penance and Communion, and pray for the wants of the Church and pious intentions of the Pope." . . . "The Indulgence of a hundred days is granted each time the 'Angelus,' or the Angel of the Lord, is said, *morning, noon, and evening*, and a plenary Indulgence once a month for those who recite it *daily*, fulfilling the above conditions. Note,

to gain this Indulgence it is prescribed to be said *kneeling on week days*, but *standing on Sundays and during Paschal time*." "The Indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines is granted to the faithful, who practise meditation or mental prayer *for half an hour, or at least for a quarter*, and also to those who teach this pious exercise to others." . . . "A plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful in the hour of death, who have *frequently* during life *invoked* the most sacred name of Jesus, and do piously call on Him at that awful hour at least in affection of heart." "The Indulgence of 300 days is granted to those who devoutly repeat the *three following* ejaculations: 'Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I offer you my heart and soul; Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony; Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul unto you in peace.'"

Whether such a Theology is calculated to deaden the conscience, and even (as it is sometimes urged against it) to encourage crime, I do not decide. Much may be said on both sides; it takes from the Romanist the fear of hell altogether, and it gives him the certainty of Purgatory. The question then depends upon another, whether men are more deterred from sinning by the definite prospect of Purgatory any how, or by the vague threat (as most men receive it) of eternal punishment. But so far is certain, that such statements, whether or not they encourage the sinner, lower the *idea* and stan-

dard of moral truth; and, whether or not they avail to comfort the penitent and fearful, at least they arrest attention and gain influence by engaging to do so.

4. Enough has now been said to show how the completeness and consistency of the Roman system tend to create a belief in its Infallibility. This being the case, it is very remarkable, that after all these very characters are wanting to it in some important respects. Not only is the doctrine of Infallibility wanting in proof, it is wanting even as a theory in two main points, and with a brief reference to these I will bring this Lecture to an end.

Romanism, though claiming for the Church the gift of Infallibility, cannot tell us *how* individuals are to know for certain that it is infallible; nor in the next place *where* the gift resides, supposing it to have been vouchsafed. It neither determines who or what is infallible, or why.

As to the first point, its advocates insist on the necessity of an infallible guide in religious matters as an argument that it has really been accorded. Now it is obvious to inquire how individuals are to know with certainty that Rome *is* infallible; by which I do not mean, what is the particular ground on which her infallibility rests, but how any ground can be such as to bring home to the mind infallibly that she is infallible,—what conceivable proof amounts to more than a probability of the fact;—and what advantage is an infallible guide, if those who

are to be guided have, after all, no more than an opinion, as the Romanists call it, that she is infallible?

They attempt to solve this difficulty by boldly maintaining that Christians do receive such an unerring perception of the whole circle of their doctrines, and that, conveyed in the Sacrament of Baptism. And this is worth noticing, were it but for the instance it affords of their custom of making internal consistency stand in the place of external proof; for to assert that Baptism gives infallible assurance of the Infallibility of Rome, is only saying that those who discern it do discern it, though those who do not discern it do not. It is not an argument tending to prove the point in dispute. We know there are individuals among Protestants who consider themselves to be infallibly taught by a divine light, but such a claim is never taken as a proof that they are favoured in the way they suppose. To consider that Baptism gives this infallible discernment of the infallible guide, is to shift the difficulty, not to solve it. And by so considering, not even the consistency of the system is really preserved; for since the professed object of Infallibility is to remove doubt and anxiety, how does it practically help a perplexed Romanist, to tell him that his Baptism ought to convey to him an infallible assurance of the external Infallibility, when the present sense of his uncertainty evidences to him that in matter of fact it does not? If such inward infallibility be requisite, it were a more

simple theory, like enthusiasts, to dispense with the external.

This abstract difficulty, however, is small compared with that attendant on the seat of the Infallibility claimed by Romanism. Little room as there is in the Roman controversy for novelty or surprise, yet it does raise fresh and fresh amazement, the more we think of it, that Romanists should not have been able to agree among themselves *where* that Infallibility is lodged which is the keystone of their system. Archbishop Bramhall[1] reckons no less than six distinct opinions on the subject; some Romanists lodging the gift in the Pope speaking *ex Cathedrâ*, others in the Pope in Council of Cardinals, others in the Pope in General or Provincial Council, or in the General Council without the Pope, or in the Church Diffusive, that is, the whole company of believers throughout the world. Bellarmine[2] observes, by way of meeting this difficulty, that all Romanists are agreed on two points; first, that wherever the Infallibility lies, at least that all Romanists agree that the Pope in General Council is infallible; next, that even out of Council when he speaks *ex Cathedrâ*, he is to be obeyed (for safety's sake,) whether really infallible or not. And no English theologian can quarrel with so wise and practical mode of settling the difficulty; but then let it be observed, that so to settle it is to deviate from

[1] Works, p. 39. Vide Leslie, iii. p. 396. [2] De Rom. Pont. iv. 2.

the high infallible line which Rome professes to walk upon in religious questions, and to descend to Bishop Butler's level, to be content to proceed not by an unerring rule, but by those probabilities which guide us in the conduct of life. After all then the baptismal illumination does not secure the very benefit which occasions Romanists to refer to it. They claim for it a power which in truth, according to their own confession, does nothing at all for them.

Nor is this all: granting that Infallibility resides in the Pope in Council, yet it is not a matter of faith, that is, it has not been formally determined what Popes have been true Popes; which of the many *de facto*, or rival Popes, are to be acknowledged; nor again which of the many professed General Councils are really so. A Romanist might at this moment deny the existing Pope to be St. Peter's successor without offending against any article of the Creed. The Gallican Church receives the Councils of Basil and Constance wholly, the Roman Church rejects both in part. The last Council of Lateran condemns the Council of Basil. The Council of Pisa is, according to Bellarmine, neither clearly approved nor clearly rejected. The Acts of other Councils are adulterated without any attempt being made to amend them. Now I repeat, such uncertainty as to the limits of Divine Revelation, is no antecedent objection to the truth of the Roman system; it might be the

appointed trial of our faith and earnestness. But it is a great inconsistency in it, being what it is, that is, engaging as it does to furnish us with infallible teaching and to supersede inquiry.

Unless it seemed like presumption to interpret the history of religion by a private rule, one might call the circumstance under consideration even providential. Nothing could be better adapted than it to defeat the counsels of human wisdom, or to show to thoughtful inquirers the hollowness of even the most specious counterfeit of divine truth. The theologians of Romanism have been able dexterously to smoothe over a thousand inconsistencies, and to array the heterogeneous precedents of a course of centuries in the semblance of design and harmony. But they cannot complete their system in its most important and essential point. They can determine in theory the nature, degree, extent, and object of the Infallibility which they claim; they cannot agree among themselves where it resides. As in the building of Babel, the Lord hath confounded their language; and the structure stands half finished, a monument at once of human daring and its failure.

But, whether we dare call it providential or not, except so far as all things must be so accounted, it at least serves to expose the pretensions of Romanism. The case stands as follows; Romanism first professes a common ground with ourselves, a readiness to stand or fall by Antiquity. When

we appeal to Antiquity accordingly, it shifts its ground, substituting for Ancient Testimony abstract arguments. If we question its abstract arguments, it falls back upon its Infallibility. If we ask for the proof of its Infallibility, it can but attempt to overpower the imagination by its attempt at system, the boldness, decision, consistency, and completeness with which it urges and acts upon its claim. Yet in this very system, thus ambitious of completeness, we are able to detect one or two serious flaws in the theory of the very doctrine which that system seems intended to sustain.

Such are some of the outlines of the theology by which Rome supersedes the teaching of the early Church. Her excuse, it seems, lies in this, that the Church now has lost the strength and persuasiveness it once had. Unanimity, uniformity, mutual intercourse, strict discipline, the freshness of Tradition, and the reminiscences of the Apostles are no more; and she would fain create by an artificial process what was natural in Antiquity. This is what can be said for her at best; and there is confessedly a difficulty in the theory of the Church's present authority; though no difficulty of course can excuse fraud and falsehood. How *we* meet the difficulty, comes next into consideration.

LECTURE V.

ON THE USE OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

By the right of Private Judgment in matters of religious belief and practice, is meant the prerogative, considered to belong to each individual Christian, of ascertaining and deciding for himself from Scripture what is Gospel truth, and what is not. This is the principle maintained in theory, as a sort of sacred possession or palladium, by the Protestantism of this day. Romanism, as is equally clear, takes the opposite extreme, and maintains that nothing is left to individual judgment; that is, that there is no subject in religious faith and conduct on which the Church may not pronounce a decision, such as to supersede the private judgment, and compel the assent, of every one of her members. The English Church takes a middle course between these two. It considers that on certain definite subjects private judgment upon the text of Scripture has been superseded, but not by the mere

authoritative sentence of the Church, but by its historical testimony delivered down from the Apostles' time. To these subjects nothing more can be added, unless, indeed, new records of primitive Christianity, or new uninterrupted traditions of its teaching were discoverable.

The Catholic doctrines, therefore, of the Trinity, Incarnation, and others similar to these, are the true interpretations of the notices contained in Scripture of those doctrines respectively. But the mere Protestant considers that on these as well as on other subjects, the sacred text is left to the good pleasure or the diligence of private men; while the Romanist, on the contrary, views it as in no degree submitted to individual judgment, except from the accident of the Church having not yet pronounced here or there an authoritative and final decision.

Now these extreme theories and their practical results are quite intelligible; whatever be their faults, want of simplicity is not one of them. We see what they mean, how they work, what they result in. But the middle path adopted by the English Church cannot be so easily mastered by the mind, first because it is a mean, and has in consequence a complex nature, involving a combination of principles, and depending on multiplied conditions; next, because it partakes of that indeterminateness which, as has been already observed, is to a certain extent a characteristic of English

theology; lastly, because it has never been realized in any religious community, and thereby brought home to the mind through the senses. What has never been fairly brought into operation, fairly lies open to various objections. It is open to the suspicion of being incapable of it, that is, of being what is commonly understood by a mere theory or fancy. And besides, a mean system really is often nothing better than an assemblage of words; and always looks such, before it is proved to be something more. For instance, if we knew only of the colours white and black, and heard a description of brown or grey, and were told that these were neither white nor black, but something like both, yet between them, we should be tempted to conceive our informant's words either self-contradictory or altogether unmeaning; as if it were plain that what was not white must be black, and what was not black must be white. This is daily instanced in the view taken by society at large of such persons, now (alas!) a comparatively small remnant, who follow the ancient doctrines and customs of our Church, who hold to the creeds and Sacraments, keep from novelties, and are regular in their devotions, and are, what is sometimes called almost in reproach, "orthodox." Worldly men, seeing them only at a distance, will class them with the religionists of the day; the religionists of the day, with a like superficial glance at them, call them worldly and carnal. Why is this? because

neither party can fancy any medium between itself and its opposite, and each connects them with the other, because they are not its own.

Feeling, then, the disadvantage under which the Anglican doctrine of Private Judgment lies, and desirous to give it something more of meaning and reality than it popularly possesses, I shall attempt to describe it, first, in theory, and then as if reduced to practice.

1. Now, if man is in a state of trial, and his trial lies in the general exercise of the will, and the choice of religion is an exercise of will, and always implies an act of individual judgment, it follows that such acts are in the number of those by which he is tried, and for which he is to give an account hereafter. So far, all parties must be agreed, that without private judgment there is no responsibility; and that in matter of fact, a man's own mind, and nothing else, is the cause of his believing or not believing, and of his acting or not acting upon his belief. Even though an infallible guidance be accorded, a man must have a choice of resisting it or not; he may resist it if he pleases, as Judas was traitor to his Master. Romanist, I consider, agrees with Protestant so far; the question in dispute being, what are the *means* which are to direct our choice, and what is the due *manner* of using them. This is the point to which I shall direct my attention.

The means which are given us to form our judg-

ment by, exclusively of such as are supernatural, which do not enter into consideration, are various, partly internal, partly external. The internal means of judging are common sense, natural perception of right and wrong, the affections, the imagination, reason, and the like. The external are such as Scripture, the existing Church, Tradition, Catholicity, Learning, Antiquity, and the National Faith. Popular Protestantism would deprive us of all these external means, except the text of Holy Scripture; as if, I suppose, upon the antecedent notion that, when God speaks by inspiration, all other external means are superseded. But this is an arbitrary decision, contrary to facts; for unless inspiration made use of an universal language, learning at least must be necessary to ascertain the meaning of the particular language selected; and if one external aid be adopted, of course all antecedent objection to any other vanishes. This notion, then, though commonly taken for granted, must be pronounced untenable, nay, inconsistent with itself; yet upon it the prevailing neglect of external assistances, and the exaltation of Private Judgment, mainly rest. Discarding this narrow view of the subject, let us rather accept all the means which are put within our reach, as intended to be used, as talents which must not be neglected; and, as so considering them, let us trace the order in which they address themselves to the minds of individuals.

Our parents and teachers are our first informants

concerning the next world; and they elicit and cherish the innate sense of right and wrong which acts as a guide co-ordinately with them. By degrees they resign their place to the religious communion, or Church, in which we find ourselves, while the inward habits of truth and holiness which the moral sense has begun to form, react upon that inward monitor, enlarge its range, and make its dictates articulate, decisive, and various. Meantime the Scriptures have been added as fresh informants, bearing witness to the Church and to the moral sense, and interpreted by them both. Last of all, where there is time and opportunity for research into times past and present, Christian Antiquity, and Christendom, as it at present exists, become additional informants, giving substance and shape to much that before existed in our minds but in outline and shadow.

Such are the means by which God conveys to Christians the knowledge of His will and Providence; but not all of them to all men. To some He vouchsafes all, to all some; but, according to the gifts given them, does He make it their duty to use them religiously. He employs these gifts as His instruments in teaching, trying, converting, advancing the mind, as the Sacraments are His imperceptible means of changing the soul. To the greater part of the world He has given but three of them, Conscience, Reason, and National Religion; to a great part of Christendom He gives no external

guidance but through the Church; to others only the Scriptures; to others both Church and Scriptures. Few are able to add the knowledge of Christian Antiquity; the first centuries of Christianity enjoyed the light of Catholicity, an informant which is now partially withdrawn from us. The least portion of these separate means of knowledge, is sufficient for a man's living religiously; but the more of them he has, the more of course he has to answer for; nor can he escape his responsibility, as most men attempt in one way or other, by hiding his talent in a napkin.

Most men, I say, try to dispense with one or other of these divine informants; and for this reason,—because it is difficult to combine them. The lights they furnish, coming from various quarters, cast separate shadows, and partially intercept each other; and it is pleasanter to walk without doubt and without shade, than to have to choose what is best and safest. The Romanist would simplify matters by removing Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity, and depending mainly upon Church authority; the Calvinist relies on Reason, Criticism, and Scripture, to the disparagement of the Moral Sense, the Church, Tradition, and Antiquity; the Latitudinarian relies on Reason, with Scripture in subordination; the Mystic on the feelings and affections, or what is commonly called the heart; the Politician takes the National Faith as sufficient, and cares for little else; the man of the world acts

by common sense, which is the oracle of the careless; the popular Religionist considers the authorized version of Scripture to be all in all. But the true Catholic Christian is he who takes what God has given him, be it greater or less, despises not the lesser because he has received the greater, yet puts it not before the greater, but uses all duly and to God's glory.

I just now said that it was difficult to combine these several means of gaining Divine Truth, and that their respective informations do not altogether agree. I mean that at first sight they do not agree, or in particular cases; for abstractedly, of course, what comes from God must be one and the same in whatever way it comes; if it seems to differ from itself, this arises from our weakness. Even our senses seem at first to contradict each other, and an infant may have difficulty in knowing how to avail himself of them, yet in time he learns to do so, and unconsciously makes allowance for their apparent discordance; and it would be utter folly on account of their differences, whatever they are, to discard the use of them. In like manner, Conscience and Reason sometimes seem at variance, and then we either call what appears to be reason sophistry, or what appears to be conscience weakness or superstition. Or, the moral sense and Scripture seem to speak a distinct language, as in their respective judgments concerning David; or Scripture and Antiquity, as regards

Christ's command to us to wash each other's feet; or Scripture and Reason as regards miracles, or the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation; or Antiquity and the existing Church, as regards immersion in Baptism; or the National Religion and Antiquity, as regards the Church's power of jurisdiction; or Antiquity and the propensities of Nature, as regards the usage of celibacy; or Antiquity and scholarship, as at times perhaps in the interpretation of Scripture.

This being the state of the case, I make the following remarks; which, being for the sake of illustration, are to be taken but as general ones, without dwelling on extreme cases or exceptions.

That Scripture, Antiquity, and Catholicity cannot really contradict one another:

That when the Moral Sense or Reason seems to be on one side, and Scripture on the other, we must follow Scripture, except Scripture anywhere contained contradictions in terms, or prescribed undeniable crimes, which it never does:

That when the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by Reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by Catholic Antiquity, we ought to side with the latter:

That when Antiquity runs counter to the present Church in important matters, we must follow Antiquity; when in unimportant matters, we must follow the present Church:

That when the present Church speaks contrary

to our private notions, and Antiquity is silent, or its decisions unknown to us, it is pious to sacrifice our own opinion to that of the Church:

That if, in spite of our efforts to agree with the Church, we still differ from it, Antiquity being silent, we must avoid causing any disturbance, recollecting that the Church, and not individuals, "has authority in controversies of faith."

I am not now concerned to prove all this, but am illustrating the theory of Private Judgment, as I conceive the English Church maintains it. And now let us consider it in practice.

2. It is popularly conceived that to maintain the right of Private Judgment, is to hold that no one has an enlightened faith who has not, as a point of duty, discussed the grounds of it and made up his mind for himself. But to put forward such doctrine as this, rightly pertains to infidels and sceptics only, and if great names may be quoted in its favour, and it is often assumed to be the true Protestant doctrine, this is surely because its advocates do not weigh the force of their own words. Every one must begin religion by faith, not by reasoning; he must take for granted what he is taught and what he cannot prove; and it is better for himself that he should do so, even if the teaching he receives contains a mixture of error. If he would possess a reverent mind, he must begin by obeying; if he would cherish a generous and devoted spirit, he must begin by venturing some-

what on uncertain information; if he would deserve the praise of modesty and humility, he must repress his busy intellect, and forbear to scrutinize. This is a sufficient explanation, were there no other, for the subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, which is in this place exacted of those who come hither for education. Were there any serious objections to those Articles, the case would be different; were there immorality or infidelity inculcated in them, or even imputed to them, we should have a warrant for drawing back; but even those who do not agree with them, will not say this of them. Putting aside then the consideration that they contain in them chief portions of the ancient Creeds, and are the form in which so many pious men in times past have expressed their own faith, even the circumstance of their constituting the religion under which we are born is a reason for our implicitly submitting ourselves to them in the first instance. As the mind expands, whether by education or years, a number of additional informants will meet it, and it will naturally, or rather it ought, according to its opportunities, to exercise itself upon all of these, by way of finding out God's perfect truth. The Christian will study Scripture and Antiquity, as well as the doctrine of his own Church; and may perhaps, in some points of detail, differ from it; but, even if eventually he differs, he will not therefore put himself forward, wrangle, protest, or separate from the Church. Further, he may go on

to examine the basis of the authority of Scripture or of the Church; and if so, he will do it, not (as is sometimes irreverently said) "impartially" and "candidly," which means sceptically and arrogantly, as if he were the centre of the universe, and all things might be summoned before him and put to task at his pleasure, but with a generous confidence in what he has been taught; nay, not recognizing, as will often happen, the process of inquiry which is going on within him. Many a man supposes that his investigation ought to be attended with a consciousness of his making it; as if it were scarcely pleasing to God unless he all along reflects upon it, tells the world of it, boasts of it as a right, and sanctifies it as a principle. He says to himself and others, 'I am examining, I am scrutinizing, I am judging, I am free to choose or reject, I am exercising the right of Private Judgment.' What a strange satisfaction! Does it increase the worth of our affections to reflect upon them as we feel them? Would our mourning for a friend become more valuable by our saying, "I am weeping; I am overcome and agonized for the second or third time; I am resolved to weep?" What a strange infatuation, to boast of our having to make up our minds! What! is it a great thing to be without an opinion? is it a satisfaction to have the truth to find? Who would boast that he was without worldly means, and had to get them as he could? Is heavenly treasure less pre-

cious than earthly? Is it anything inspiring or consolatory to consider, as such persons do, that Almighty God has left them entirely to their own efforts, has failed to anticipate their wants, has let them lose in ignorance at least a considerable part of their short life and their tenderest and most malleable years? is it a hardship or a yoke, on the contrary, to be told that what is put before them to believe in the order of Providence, whether absolutely true or not, is in such sense from Him, that it will improve their hearts to obey it, and convey to them many truths which they otherwise would not know, and prepare them perchance for the communication of higher and clearer views? Yet such is a commonly received doctrine of this day; against which, I would plainly maintain,—not the Roman doctrine of Infallibility, which even if true, would be of application only to a portion of mankind, for few comparatively hear of Rome,—but generally that, under whatever system a man finds himself, he is bound to accept it as if infallible, and to act upon it in a confiding spirit, till he finds a better, or in course of time has cause to suspect it.

To this it may be replied by the Romanist, that, granting we succeed in persuading men in the first instance to exercise this unsuspicious faith in what is set before them in the course of Providence, yet, if the right of free judgment upon the text of Scripture is allowed at last, it will be sure, whenever it is allowed, to carry them off into various discordant

opinions; that individuals will fancy they have found out a more Scriptural system even than that of the Church Catholic itself, should they happen to have been born and educated in her pale. But I am not willing to grant this of the Holy Scriptures, though Romanists are accustomed to assume it. There have been writers of their communion, indeed, who have used the most disparaging terms of the inspired volume, as if it were so mere a letter that it might be moulded into any meaning which the reader chose to put upon it. Some of their expressions and statements have been noticed by our divines; such as, that "the Scriptures are worth no more than Esop's fables without the Church's authority;" or that "they are like a nose of wax which admits of being pulled and moulded one way and another[1]."

In contradiction to these expressions, it surely may be maintained, not only that the Scriptures have but one direct and unchangeable sense, but that it is such as in all greater matters to make a forcible appeal to the mind, when fairly put before it, and to impress it with a conviction of its being the true one. Little of systematic knowledge as Scripture may impart to ordinary readers, still what it does convey may surely tend in one direction and not in another. What it imparts may look towards the system of the Church and

[1] Stillingfleet. Grounds. i. 5. § 2. p. 138.

of Antiquity, not oppose it. Whether it does so or not, is a question of fact which must be determined as facts are determined; but here let us dwell for a moment on the mere idea which I have suggested. There is no reason why the Romanist should startle at the notion. Why is it more incongruous to suppose that our minds are so constituted as to be sure to a certain point of the true meaning of words, than of the correctness of an argument? yet Romanists do argue. If it is possible to be sure of the soundness of an argument, there is perchance no antecedent reason to hinder our being as sure that a text has a certain sense. Men, it is granted, continually misinterpret Scripture; so are they as continually using bad arguments; and, as the latter circumstance does not destroy the mind's innate power of reasoning, so neither does the former show it is destitute of its innate power of interpreting. Nay, the Romanists themselves continually argue with individuals from Scripture, even in proof of this very doctrine of the Church's Infallibility, which would be out of place unless the passages appealed to bore their own meaning with them. What I would urge is this; the Romanists of course confess that the real sense of Scripture is not adverse to any doctrine taught by the Church; all I would maintain in addition is, that it is also the natural sense, as separable from false interpretations by the sound-judging, as a good argument is from a bad one. And

as so believing, we think no harm can come from putting the Scripture into the hands of the laity, allowing them, if they will, to verify by it, as far as it extends, the doctrines they have been already taught.

They will answer that all this is negatived by experience, even though it be abstractedly possible; since, in fact, the general reading of the Bible has brought into our country and Church all kinds of heresies and extravagances. Certainly it has; but it has not been introduced under those limitations and provisions, which I have mentioned as necessary attendants on it, according to the scheme designed by Providence. If Scripture reading has been the cause of schism, this has been because individuals have given themselves to it to the disparagement of God's other gifts; because they have refused to throw themselves into the external system which has been provided for them, because they have attempted to reason before they acted, and to prove before they would be taught. If it has been the cause of schism in our country, it is because the Anglican Church has never had the opportunity of supplying adequately that assistance which is its divinely provided complement; because her voice has been feeble, her motions impeded, and the means never given her of impressing upon the population her own doctrine; because the Reformation was set up in disunion, and theories more Protestant than hers have, from the first, spoken

with her, and blended with, and sometimes drowned her voice. If Scripture reading has, in England, been the cause of schism, it is because we are deprived of the power of excommunicating, which, in the revealed scheme, is the formal antagonist and curb of Private Judgment. But take a Church, nurtured and trained on this model, claiming the obedience of its members in the first instance, though laying itself open afterwards to their judgment, according to their respective capabilities for judging, claiming that they should make a generous and unsuspicious trial of it before they objected to it, and able to appeal confidently for its doctrines to the writings of Antiquity; a Church which taught the Truth boldly and in system, and which separated from itself or silenced those which opposed it, and I believe individual members would be very little perplexed; and, if men were still found to resist its doctrine, they would not be, as now, misguided persons, with some good feelings, and right views, but such as one should be glad to be rid of. One chief cause of sects among us is, that the Church's voice is not heard clearly and forcibly; she does not exercise her own right of interpreting Scripture; she does not arbitrate, decide, condemn; she does not answer the call which human nature makes upon her. That all her members would in that case perfectly agree with each other, or with herself, I am far from supposing; but they would differ chiefly in such matters as would not forfeit

their membership, nor lead them to protest against the received doctrine. If, even as it is, the great body of Dissenters from the Church during the last centuries remained more or less constant to the Creeds, except in the article which was compromised in their Dissent, surely much more fully and firmly would her members then abide in the fundamentals of faith, though Scripture was ever so freely put into their hands. We see it so at this day. For on which side is the most lack at this moment? in the laity in believing? or the Church in teaching? Are not the laity every where willing to treat their pastors with becoming respect; nay so follow their guidance as to take up their particular views, according as they may be of a Catholic or private character, in this or that place? Is there any doubt at all that the laity would think alike, if the Clergy did? and is there any doubt that the Clergy would think alike, as far as the formal expression of their faith went, if they had their views cleared by a theological education, and moulded by a knowledge of Antiquity? We have no need to grudge our people the religious use of Private Judgment; we need not distrust their affection, we have but to blame our own waverings and differences.

The free reading of Scripture, I say, when the other parts of the Divine System are duly fulfilled, would lead, at most, to diversities of opinion only in the adjuncts and details of faith, not in funda-

mentals. Men differ from each other at present, first from the influence of the false theories of Private Judgment which are among us, and which mislead them; next from the want of external guidance. They are enjoined, as a matter of duty, to examine and decide for themselves, and the Church but faintly protests against this proceeding, or supersedes the need of it. Truth has a force which error cannot counterfeit; and the Church, speaking out that Truth, as committed to her, would cause a corresponding vibration in Holy Scripture, such as no other notes, however loudly sounded, can draw from it. If, after all, persons arose, as they would arise, disputing against the fundamentals, or separating on minor points, let them go their way; "they went out from us, because they were not of us." They would commonly be "men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith[1];" I do not say there never could be any other, but for such extraordinary cases no system can provide. If there were better men, who, though educated in the Truth, ultimately opposed it openly, they, as well as others, would be put out of the Church for their error's sake, and for their contumacy; and God, who alone sees the hearts of men, and how mysteriously good and evil are mingled together in this world, would provide in His own inscrutable way for anomalies which His revealed system did not meet.

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 8.

I consider, then, on the whole that, however difficult it may be in theory to determine when we must go by our own view of Scripture, when by the decision of the Church, yet in practice there would be little or no difficulty at all. Without claiming infallibility, the Church may claim the confidence and obedience of her members; Scripture may be read without tending to schism; minor differences allowed, without disagreement in fundamentals; and the proud and self-willed disputant discarded without the perplexed inquirer suffering. If there is schism among us, it is not that Scripture speaks variously, but that the Church of the day speaks not at all; not that Private Judgment is rebellious, but that the Church's judgment is withheld.

I do really believe that, with more of primitive simplicity and of rational freedom, and far more of Gospel truth than in Romanism, there would be found in the rule of Private Judgment, as I have described it, as much certainty as the doctrine of Infallibility can give. As ample provision would be made both for the comfort of the individual, and for the peace and unity of the body; which are the two objects for which Romanism professes to consult. The claim of Infallibility is but an expedient for impressing strongly upon the mind the necessity of hearing and of obeying the Church. When scrutinized carefully, it will be found to contribute nothing whatever

towards satisfying the reason, as was observed in another connection; since it is as difficult to prove and bring home to the mind that the Church is infallible, as that the doctrines it teaches are true. Nothing, then, is gained in the way of conviction; only of impression,—and, again, of expedition, it being less trouble to accept one doctrine on which all the others are to depend, than a number. Now this external impressiveness and practical perspicuity, as far as they are lawful and salutary, may, I say, be gained without this claim; it may be gained in God's way, without presumptuous additions to the means of influence which He has ordained, without a tenet, fictitious in itself, and, as falsehood ever will be, deplorable in many ways in its results.

LECTURE VI.

ON THE ABUSE OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

I MUST not quit the subject of Private Judgment, without some remarks on the popular view of it; which is as follows,—that every Christian has the right of making up his mind for himself what he is to believe, from personal and private study of the Scriptures. This, I suppose, is the fairest account to give of it; though sometimes Private Judgment is considered rather as the necessary duty than the privilege of the Christian, and a slur is cast upon hereditary religion, as worthless or absurd; and much is said in praise of independence of mind, free inquiry, the resolution to judge for ourselves, and the enlightened and spiritual temper which these things are supposed to produce. But this notion is so very preposterous, there is something so very strange and wild in maintaining that every individual Christian, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, young and old, in order to have an

intelligent faith, must have formally examined, deliberated, and passed sentence upon the meaning of Scripture for himself, and that in the highest and most delicate and mysterious matters of faith, that I am unable either to discuss or even to impute such an opinion to another, in spite of the large and startling declarations which men make on the subject. Rather let us consider what is called the *right* of Private Judgment; by which is meant, not that all *must*, but that all *may* search Scripture, and determine or prove their Creed from it: that is, provided they are duly qualified, for I suppose this is always implied, though persons may differ what the qualifications are. And with this limitation, I should be as willing as the most zealous Protestant to allow the principle of Private Judgment in the abstract; and it is something to agree with opponents even in an abstract principle.

At the same time, to speak correctly, there seems a still more advisable mode of speaking of Private Judgment, than either of those which have been mentioned. It is neither the duty of all Christians, nor the right of all who are qualified, but the duty of all who are qualified; and as such it was spoken of in the last Lecture. However, whether it be a duty or a right, let us consider what the qualifications are for exercising it.

To take the extreme case: inability to read will be granted to be an obstacle in the exercise of it;

that is, a necessary obstacle to a certain extent, for more need not be assumed, and perhaps will not be conceded by all. But there are other impediments, less obvious, indeed, but quite as serious. I shall instance two principal ones;—prejudice, in the large sense of the word, whether right or wrong prejudice, and whether true or false in its matter,—and inaccuracy of mind. And first of the latter.

1. The task proposed is such as this,—to determine first whether Scripture sets forth any dogmatic faith at all; next, if so, what it is; then, if it be necessary for salvation; then, what are its doctrines in particular; then, what is that exact idea of each, which is its essence and its saving principle. For instance; a man may think he holds the doctrine of the Atonement; but, when examined, may be convicted of having quite mistaken the meaning of the word. This being considered, I think it will be granted me, by the most zealous opponent, that the mass of Christians are inadequate to such a task; I mean, that *if* the Gospel be dogmatic, for that I am here assuming, if it be of the nature of the Articles of the Creed, or the Thirty-Nine Articles, the great proportion even of educated persons have not the accuracy of mind requisite for determining it. The only question is, whether any accurate Creed is necessary for the private Christian, which orthodox Protestants always maintain. Consider, then, the orthodox Protestant doctrines; those relating to the Divine nature, and the Eco-

nomy of Redemption; or those, again, arising from the controversy with Rome, and let me ask the popular religionist,—Do you really mean to say, that men and women, as we find them in life, are able to deduce these doctrines from Scripture, to determine how far Scripture goes in implying them, the exact weight of its terms, and the danger of this or that deviation from them? What even is so scarce, in the multitude of men, as the power of stating any simple matter of fact as they witnessed it? How rarely do their words run with their memory, or their memory with the thing in question! With what difficulty is a speaker or a writer understood by them, if he puts forward anything new or recondite! What mistakes are there circulating through society about the tenets of individuals of whatever cast of opinion! What interminable confusions and misunderstandings in controversy are there among the most earnest men! What questions of words instead of things! View the state of the case in detail. For instance; let it be proposed to one of the common run of men, however pious and well meaning, to determine what is the true Scripture doctrine about original sin, whether Adam's sin is or is not imputed; or again, about the Holy Eucharist, how to interpret our Lord's words; or again, whether we are justified by works, or by faith, or by faith only, what answer can he be expected to give? If it be said, in answer, that he may gain religious

impressions and practical guidance from Scripture, without being able to solve these questions; I grant that this, thank God, is, through His blessing, abundantly possible; but the question is, whether Gospel *doctrine*, the special "form of sound words" which is called the Faith, whatever it be, can be so ascertained. I say "whatever it be," for it matters not here whether it be long or short, intricate or simple; if there be but one dogma, as it is called, one truth in the shape of a declaration or proposition, such as, "Christ is God," or "we are justified by faith only," I say this is enough to put the problem of proving it from Scripture beyond the capacity of so considerable a number of persons, that the right of Private Judgment will be confined to what is called in this world's matters, an exclusive body, or will be a monopoly. Aud I repeat, it does seem as if reflecting men would grant as much as this; only they would deny that the Gospel need be conveyed in any but popular propositions, it being a matter of the heart, not of creeds, not of niceties of words, not of doctrines necessary to be believed in order to salvation. They would maintain that it was enough to accept Christ as a Saviour, and to act upon the belief; and this, they would say, might be obtained from Scripture by any earnest mind.

Now here it may be asked me in turn, whether there are not a number of Christians who on either supposition, whether the creed is given them by the

Church, or whether they have to find it in Scripture for themselves, yet cannot get beyond that vague notion of the Gospel which has just been mentioned. I do grant it; but then I maintain, that every Christian is bound to have as accurate notions as he can, and that many a man is capable of *receiving* more accurate notions than he can *gather* for himself from the Bible. It is one thing to apprehend the Catholic doctrines; quite another to ascertain how and where they are implied in Scripture. Most men of fair education can understand the sacred doctrine debated at Nicea, as fully as a professed theologian; but few have minds tutored into patient inquiry, attention, and accuracy sufficient to prove it aright from Scripture. Scripture is not so clear—in God's providential arrangement, to which we submit—as to hinder ordinary persons, who read it for themselves, from being Sabellians, or Independents, or Wesleyans. I do not deny, I earnestly maintain that orthodoxy in its fullest range is the one and only sense of Scripture; nor do I say that Scripture is not distinct enough to keep the multitude from certain gross forms of heterodoxy, as Socinianism; nor do I presume to limit what God will do in extraordinary cases; much less do I deny that Scripture will place any earnest inquirer in that position of mind which will cause him to embrace the Catholic creed, when offered, as the real counterpart and complement of the view which Scripture has given

him; but I deny that the mass of Christians, perusing the Scripture merely by themselves, will be secured from Sabellianism in Germany or America, from Pelagianism in Geneva, or from undervaluing the Sacraments in Scotland. All that can be objected is that Sabellianism, and Pelagianism, and low notions of the Sacraments, are not injurious, where the heart is warm and the feelings (what is improperly called) spiritual.

But it may be said that at least the common run of people can see what is *not* in Scripture, whatever be their defect of accuracy; and that thus in a Popish country they may obtain clear views of the Gospel from Scripture, when the Church has corrupted it. To a certain point they may; but an accuracy, which they have not, will be necessary to teach them where to stop in their retrenchments of faith. What is to secure their stopping at the very point we wish? Is all that really is in Scripture clearly stated, and may all that is but implied be rejected? What is to hinder the multitude of men who have been allowed to reject the doctrine of Transubstantiation because *they* do not find it in Scripture, from rejecting, also, the divinity of the Holy Ghost, because He is no where plainly called God? No; such Private Judgment is a weapon which destroys error by the sacrifice of truth.

From all this I conclude that persons who maintain that the mass of Christians are bound to draw the orthodox faith for themselves from Scripture,

hold an unreal doctrine, and are in a false position; that, to be consistent, they must go further one way or the other, either cease to think orthodoxy necessary, or allow it to be taught them.

2, In the next place, let us consider what force prepossessions have in disqualifying us from searching Scripture dispassionately for ourselves. The mass of men are hindered from forming their own views of doctrine, not only from the peculiar structure of the sacred Volume, but from the external bias which they ever receive from education and other causes. Without proving the influence of prejudice, which would be superfluous, let us consider some of the effects of it. For instance; one man sees the doctrine of absolute predestination in Scripture so clearly, as he considers, that he makes it almost an article of saving faith; another thinks it a most dangerous error. One man maintains, that the civil establishment of religion is commanded in Scripture, another that it is condemned by it. Such instances do not show that Scripture has no one certain meaning, but that it is not so distinct and prominent, as to force itself upon the minds of the many against their various prejudices. Nor do they prove that all prejudice is wrong; but that some particular prejudices are not true; and that, since it is impossible to be without some or other, it is expedient to impress the mind with that which is true; that is, with the faith taught by the Church Catholic, and ascer-

tainable as a matter of fact beyond the influence of prejudice.

Again: take the explanations in detail given by Protestants of particular texts of Scripture; they will be found to be made with an inconsistency and want of intelligible principle, which shows how impossible it is for the mass of men to contemplate Scripture without imparting to it the colouring which they themselves have received in the course of their education. Nothing is more striking, in popular interpretations and discussions, than the amplitude of meaning which is sometimes allowed to the sacred text, compared with its assumed narrowness at other times. In some places it is liberally opened, at others it is kept close shut; sometimes a single word is developed into an argument, at another it is denied to mean anything specific and definite, anything but what is accidental and transient. At times the commentator is sensitively alive to the most distant allusions, at times he is impenetrable to any; at times he decides that the sacred text is figurative, at other times only literal; without any assignable reason except that the particular religious persuasion to which he belongs requires such inconsistency. For instance, when Christ said to the *Apostles*, "Drink ye *all* of this," He is considered to imply that all the *laity* should partake the cup; yet, when He said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," He spoke to the original Apostles exclusively. When St. Paul speaks of

"the man of sin," he meant a succession of sinners; but when Christ said, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," He does not mean a line of Apostles. When St. Paul says of the Old Testament, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," he includes the New; yet when he says, "We are come to the city of the living God," he does not include the Church militant. "A fountain shall be opened for sin," does not prove baptismal grace; but "Christ is unto us righteousness," proves that He fulfils the law instead of us. "The fire must prove every man's work," is said to be a figure; yet, "Let no man judge you in meats and drinks," is to be taken to the letter as an argument against fasting. "Do this in remembrance of me," is to be understood as a command; but, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet," is not a command. "Let no man judge you in respect of a holyday, or of the Sabbath-days," is an argument not against the Sabbath, but against holy-days. "Search the Scriptures," is an argument for Scripture being the rule of faith; but "hold the Traditions," is no argument in favour of Tradition. "Forbidding to marry" is a proof that Rome is Antichrist; but, "It is good for a man not to marry," is no argument in favour of celibacy. The Sermon on the Mount contains no direction to Protestants to fast; but the second Commandment is plainly against Image Worship. The Romanist in using prayers in an unknown

tongue contradicts the 14th chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians; but the Protestant, in his exposition of justification by faith *only* [1], may be indulged in contradicting St. James without agreeing with St. Paul. Let me not be supposed to imply that all these interpretations are equally true and equally false; that some are not false and others not true; it will be plain to any one who examines them that this is not my meaning. I am but showing the extreme inconsistency which is found in the popular mode of interpreting Scripture; men profess to explain Scripture by itself and by reason, yet go by no rule, nor can give any account of their mode of proceeding. They take the most difficult points for granted, and say they go by common sense when they really go by prejudice. Doubtless Scripture is sometimes literal and sometimes figurative; it need not be literal here, because it is literal there; but, in many cases, the only way of determining when it is one and when the other, is to see how the early Church understood it. This is the Anglican principle; we do not profess to judge of Scripture in greater matters by itself, but by means of an external guide. But the popular religion of the day does; and it finds itself unequal to its profession. It rebels against the voice of Antiquity, and becomes the victim of prejudice and

[1] For the true sense of this doctrine in the English Church, vide Bishop Bull's *Harmonia;* whom the Author has attempted to follow in his Sermons, Volume iii. Serm. 6.

a slave to Traditions of men. It interprets Scripture in a spirit of caprice, which might be made, and is made by others, to prove Romanism quite as well. And from all this I infer, not that Scripture has no one meaning in matters of doctrine, or that we do not know it, or that a man of high qualifications may not elicit it, but that the mass of men, if left to themselves, will not possess the faculty of reading it naturally and truly.

But more may be said in illustration of this subject. It is very observable how a latent prejudice can act in obscuring or rather annihilating certain passages of Scripture in the mental vision, which are ever so prominently presented to the bodily eyes. For instance, a man perhaps is in the habit of reading it for years, and has no impression whatever produced on his mind by such portions of it as speak of free grace, and the need of spiritual aid. These are suddenly and forcibly brought home to him; and then perhaps he changes his religious views altogether, and declares that Scripture has hitherto been to him nothing better than a sealed book. What security has he that in certain other respects it is not still hidden from him, as it was heretofore as regards the portions which have now unsettled him? Anglican divines will consider him still dark on certain other points of Scripture doctrine. Or, again, I would ask him what satisfactory sense he puts to our Lord's words, "Verily, thou shalt in nowise come

out thence till thou hast paid the very last farthing?" or, "Stand fast and hold the Traditions?" or, "Let them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord?" and whether a Romanist might not as fairly accuse him of neglecting these still, as he now makes certain others, to which he was before blind, the sum and substance of his religion?

Or, to take another and more painful illustration. The (so-called) Unitarians explain away the most explicit texts in behalf of our Lord's divinity. These texts do not affect them at all. Let us consider how this is. When we come to inquire, they have, it would seem, a preconceived notion in their minds that the substance of the Gospel lies in the doctrine of the Resurrection. This doctrine is their Christianity, their orthodoxy; it contains in it, as they think, the essence of the revelation. When then they come to the texts in question, such as "Christ, who is over all, God, blessed for ever;" or, "The Word was God;" they have beforehand made up their minds, that, whatever these words mean, they can have no important meaning, because they do not refer to the Resurrection; for that alone they will allow to be important. So, when they are pressed with them in argument, they are vexed and annoyed at having to explain what they mean, when they cannot satisfactorily; without, however, feeling shame and mis-

givings from their appearing to tell against them. Rather, they think the objection idle,—not serious, but troublesome. It is in their view almost as if we asked them the meaning of any merely obscure passage, such as "baptizing for the dead;" and would not let them read the chapter through in which it occurs, till they had explained it. In such a case they would of course urge that we were acting very unfairly; that, when the drift of the whole was so plain, it was mere trifling to stop them at one half sentence, which after all they were ready to confess they did not understand. This is what they actually do feel towards the solemn texts lately cited. They consider them obscurities; they avow they do not understand them; and they boldly ask, what then? that they are but a few words, half a sentence perhaps, in a chapter otherwise clear and connected; and they do not feel themselves bound down to explain every phrase or word of Scripture which may meet them. If then, at any time, they undertake to explain them, it is not as if they laid any particular stress on such explanations. They are not confident, they are not careful, about their correctness; they do not mind altering them. They put forward whatever will stop or embarrass their opponent, nothing more. They use some anomalous criticism, or alter the stopping, or amend the text, and all because they have made up their minds

already what the Gospel is, that some other doctrine is the whole of it, and that in consequence the question in dispute is very unimportant.

Is this state of mind incredible? Yet, from whatever cause, they undeniably do contrive to blind themselves to what Scripture says concerning the Trinity and Incarnation, which is all that concerns us here. It shows that Scripture does not teach doctrine as the Athanasian Creed teaches it; the prejudices which are too great for the one, are not too great for the other. But after all it is not so incredible, ourselves being witnesses; as will directly appear. As Socinians take the Resurrection to be the whole of the Gospel, so do others take the Atonement to be the whole of it. This sacred doctrine is most essential, as essential as the Resurrection, but it is nowhere said to be the whole of Christianity; nowhere is it so presented to us as to sanction us in neglecting the rest. Yet, as Socinians make the Resurrection everything, and overlook the Incarnation, so again there are very many Christians who agree with them as far as this, in a like indulgence of theory and prejudice, making, as they do, the doctrine of the Atonement not only an essential but the whole of the Gospel. This then is *their* orthodoxy. For instance; St. Paul says, "God was manifested in the flesh;" Socinians pass over these words, or explain them any how; but what are the words immediately before them? They stand thus: "The Church of the

living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth." Now, I do not ask what these words mean; I do not ask in what sense the Church is a pillar; but merely this,—has not many a man who calls himself orthodox, and is orthodox so far as not to be a Socinian, passed over these words again and again, either not noticing them or not thinking it mattered whether he understood them or not? And when his attention is called to them, is he not impatient and irritated, rather than perplexed; fully confident that they mean nothing of consequence, yet feeling he is bound in fairness to attempt some explanation of them? and does he not in consequence drive to and fro, as if to burst the net in which he finds himself, giving first one solution of the difficulty, then another, altering the stopping, or glossing over the phrase, as will most readily answer his immediate purpose? And so, in like manner, many a man insists on the words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," who will not go on to our Lord's answer, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." Let us, then, no longer wonder at Socinians: the mass of Christians bring their prejudices and impressions to the written word, as well as they, and find it easier to judge of the text by the spontaneous operation of habit and inclination, than by the active and independent exercise of their reason; in other words, they think *inaccurately* but they judge and feel by *prejudice*.

Here then we have two serious disqualifications in the case of the multitude of men, which must discourage those who are in any measure humble and cautious, from attempting to rely on their own unassisted interpretation of Scripture, if they can avoid it. Scripture is not so distinct in its announcements, as readers are morally or intellectually slow in receiving them. And if any one thinks that this avowal is derogatory to Scripture, I answer that Scripture was never intended to teach doctrine to the many; and if it was not given with this object, it argues no imperfection in it that it does not fulfil it.

I repeat it; while Scripture is written by inspired men, with one and one only view of doctrine in their hearts and contemplations, even the Truth which was from the beginning, yet being written not to instruct in doctrine, but for those who were already instructed in it, not with direct announcements but with intimations and implications of the faith, the qualifications for rightly apprehending it are so rare and high, that a prudent man, to say nothing of piety, will not risk his salvation on the chance of his having them; but will read it with the aid of those subsidiary guides which ever have been supplied as if to meet our need. I would not deny as an abstract proposition that a Christian may gain the whole truth from the Scriptures, but would maintain that the chances are very seriously against a given individual. I would not deny, but rather

maintain that a religious, wise, and intellectually gifted man will succeed: but who answers to this description but the collective Church? There, indeed, such qualifications might be supposed to exist; what is wanting in one member being supplied by another, and the contrary errors of individuals eliminated by their combination. The Church truly may be said almost infallibly to interpret Scripture, though from the possession of past tradition, and amid the divisions of the time present, perhaps at no period in the course of the Dispensation has she had the need and the opportunity of interpreting it for herself. Neither would I deny that individuals, whether from height of holiness, clearness of intellectual vision, or the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, have been and are able to penetrate through the sacred text into some portions of the divine system beyond without external help; though since that help has ever been given, as to the Church, so to the individual, it is difficult to prove that the individual has performed what the Church has never attempted. None, however, it would seem, but a complete and accurately moulded Christian, such as the world has never or scarcely seen, would be able to bring out harmoniously and perspicuously the full divine characters which lie hid from mortal eyes within the inspired letter of the revelation. And this, by the way, may be taken as one remarkable test, or at least characteristic of

error, in the various denominations of religion which surround us; none of them embraces the whole Bible, none of them is able to interpret the whole, none of them has a key which will revolve through the entire compass of the wards which lie within. Each has its favourite text, and neglects the rest. None can solve the great secret and utter the mystery of its pages. One makes trial, then another: but one and all in turn are foiled. They retire, as the sages of Babylon, and make way for Daniel. The Church Catholic, the true Prophet of God, alone is able to tell the dream and its interpretation.

3. But it may be objected that full justice has not yet been done to the arguments of the popular religion. A widely extended shape of Protestantism in this country, and that which professes to be the most religious of all, maintains that, though Scripture may seem to mean any thing in matters of faith to unassisted reason, yet that under the guidance of divine illumination it speaks but one doctrine, and is thus the instrument of the Holy Ghost in converting the soul. Starting from this fundamental article, its advocates speak as follows:— that Scripture is the only divine instrument given us; that every thing else is human; that the Church is human; that rites and sacraments are human; that teachers are human; that the Fathers are but fallible men; that creeds and confessions, primitive faith, Apostolical Traditions, are human systems, and doc-

trines of men; that there is no need of proving this in particular instances, because it is an elementary principle, which holds good of them *all;* and that till we acknowledge and accept this principle we are still in the flesh. It follows that to inquire about the early Church, the consent of Fathers, unbroken testimonies, or Councils, to inquire when the Church first became corrupt, or to make the primitive writers a comment upon the inspired text, are but melancholy and pernicious follies. The Church, according to this view of it, is not, and never was, more than a collection of individuals. Some of those individuals have, in every age, been, through God's mercy, spiritually enlightened, and may have shed a radiance round them, and influenced the Christian body even for ages after them; but, true religion being always rare, and the many being always evil, an appeal lies as little with Antiquity as with modern times. The Apostolic Church was not better than the present, nor is of more weight and authority; it was a human system, and an aggregate of fallible men, and such is the length and the breadth of the whole matter. In the eyes of such religionists the very subject of these Lectures is irrelevant and nugatory, and the time and attention required to hear or to write them are but squandered upon earthly subjects, which supply no food for the hungry soul, no light for the wandering feet, no stay or consolation in the hour of death or the day of judgment.

I trust this is, on the whole, a fair view of what many thousands (alas!) of serious and well-meaning persons hold at this present time among us; and are so sure they are right, that they consider that no one is a real Christian who does not assent to it, and that no one can have once seen and acknowledged it, but must for ever profess it as something more heavenly and comfortable than any doctrine he ever maintained before. And this feeling, which their conduct evidences, perhaps accounts for the state in which they leave the theory in question, which is as follows.—It is perfect *as* a theory; I mean, it is consistent with itself, it being quite conceivable that Providence might have acted in the way it represents, might have called the predestined few, or tried the earnestness of all, by what is at first sight a various and intricate volume. But secondly, I observe that, whether it be true or false, no part of the foregoing account goes towards the proof of it, nor is any serious attempt made that way by its advocates. As Baptismal grace is supposed by the Romanists to convey to individuals the evidence of their Church's Infallibility, so a similar divine influence, but not in Baptism, is supposed, according to this popular religion, to assure the soul without proof that the Bible is the only source of divine knowledge.

The only semblance of argument in the *primâ facie* statement as above drawn out, lies in this, that the majority being always evil, its faith is no

presumption of truth. Something has been said in former Lectures which will serve to explain this objection, and something will be said in one soon to follow. Here I will but observe that the multitude may witness for truth and yet act against it; that it is the very peculiarity of the world that it kills the Prophets of God and builds their sepulchres,—the very charge against it that "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death," yet it "not only does the same, but has pleasure in them that practise them;" and that this inconsistency in its conduct was never considered to interfere with the value of its witness. When men witness against themselves, this surely affords no presumption that they witness falsely. Does "the corruption that is in the world through lust" invalidate or corroborate its unanimous testimony to the being of a moral Governor and Judge, and again to the sovereignty of the moral law and to the guilt and pollution of sin? Surely then the concordant assent of Christendom to doctrines so severe and high as the Christian Mysteries, is a stronger argument in favour of their Apostolic origin, than if they were more pleasing and acceptable to the nature of man. Is there any thing in the doctrine of the Trinity to flatter human pride? or in that of the Incarnation to encourage carnal tastes and appetites? or in that of the Spirit's abidance within us to make us easy and irreverent? or in the Atonement to make us

think lightly of sin? Fallible men then may convey truth infallible; human systems may be instruments of heaven. And he who feels his ignorance will seek for light wherever he can obtain it; he will not prescribe rules to God's providence; he will not say "inform me by inspired oracles or not at all." If indeed full information had been promised to individuals from private study of the text of the Scriptures, this indeed might be a reason for dispensing with Antiquity, whatever was its value. But even could it be proved without value, as fully as the persons in question desire, still it must be recollected this would not go one step towards proving that such a promise of guidance from reading Scripture has been given; and it happens most remarkably, as I have already hinted, that satisfied, I suppose, with the simplicity of their theory, they have chiefly employed themselves in assailing the Christian Fathers, without proving what far more nearly concerns them, their own doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture for teaching the faith; which failing, the Fathers are their sole, even though an insufficient resource. In conclusion, then, I will review the chief arguments, if they must so be called, adducible in defence of this main principle of popular Protestantism.

Now, if its advocates are asked on what grounds they conceive that Scripture is, under God's grace, the one ordained informant in saving truth, I suppose they will refer to such texts as our Lord's

words to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures;" or to St. Paul's, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works;" or to St. Luke's account of Christ's "opening" His Apostles' "understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures;" or to St. James's telling us "to ask for wisdom of God, who giveth liberally;" or to our Lord's assurance, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" or to St. Paul's statement, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" or to our Lord's promise to the twelve, that the Holy Ghost the Comforter "should guide them into all truth;" or to the prophet Isaiah's prediction, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord;" or to St. John's declaration, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Yet after all, can any one text be produced, or any comparison of texts, to establish the very point in hand, that Scripture is the sole necessary instrument of the Holy Ghost for guiding the individual Christian into saving truth? for it may be very true that we ought to search the Scriptures, and true that Scripture contains all saving doctrine, and true that we cannot understand it without the Holy Spirit, and true that the Holy Spirit is given to all who ask, and true that all perfect Christians do understand it, and yet there may not be such connexion

between these separate propositions as to make it true that men are led by the Holy Spirit into saving truth *through* the Scriptures. We may be bound to search the Scriptures, yet not to find saving doctrines, but chiefly to be throughly "furnished unto *all good works*;" it may contain all saving doctrine, yet so deeply lodged there, that "those who are *unlearned* and unstable may wrest it unto their own destruction;" the Holy Ghost may be promised to all Christians, yet not in order to teach them the *faith* through *Scripture*, but in order to impress Scripture on their hearts, and to teach them the faith through *whatever* sources. Let us inspect some of the foregoing texts more narrowly.

First, there are texts which bid us ask wisdom of God, and promise that it will be granted [1]. It is true, but this does not show that the *private* reading of *Scripture* is the *one* essential requisite for gaining it. If such texts are taken by themselves, they would rather prove that *no* external means at all is necessary, not even Scripture, for Scripture is not mentioned. To be consistent, we ought to call the Scripture an outward form as well as the Church, and to say that "asking," in other words, prayer, is alone necessary. If then one external means of information is admitted as intervening between the Holy Ghost and the soul, though it is not mentioned, why not

[1] Matt. vii. 7. James i. 5.

another? When Christ says, "Ask, and ye shall find," He does not specify the *mode* of seeking; He means, as we may suppose, by all methods which are vouchsafed to us, and are otherwise specified. He includes the Church, which is called "the pillar and ground of the Truth." Our Service applies the promise to seeking God in Baptism, and as it may include the use of the Sacraments, so may it include the use of Catholic teaching.

Again, no Christian can doubt that without divine grace we cannot discern the sense of Scripture profitably; but it does not follow from this that with it we can gain every thing from Scripture. The grace of God seems to be promised us chiefly for practical purposes, for enabling us to receive what we receive, whatever it is, doctrine or precept, or from whatever quarter, profitably, with a lively faith, with love and zeal. If it supersedes Creeds, why should it not supersede Sacraments? it acts through Sacraments, and in like manner it acts through Creeds. Sacraments, without the presence of the Holy Ghost, would sink into mere Jewish rites; and Creeds, without a similar presence, are but a dead letter. The appointment of Sacraments is in Scripture, and so is the proof of the Creed; yet Scripture is no more a Creed than it is a Sacrament. By continuous Tradition we have received the Sacraments embodied in a certain definite form; and by a like Tradition we have received the doctrines also; Scripture may justify both the

one and the other when given, without being sufficient to lead individuals to frame and observe them, before they are given. Besides, if the Holy Spirit illuminates the word of God to the individual in all things, then of course as regards unfulfilled prophecy also; which we know is not the case. As then, for all that the Spirit is given, yet the event is necessary to interpret prophecy, so in like manner a similar external fact may be necessary for understanding doctrine. True then though it be that "the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God;" it does not therefore follow that the spiritual man discerneth spiritual things through Scripture only, not through Creeds.

Lastly: there are texts which recite the various purposes for which Scripture is useful; but it does not follow that no medium is necessary for its becoming useful to individuals. Scripture may be profitable for doctrine, instruction, and correction, that the man of God may be perfect, without thereby determining at all whether or not there are instruments for preparing, dispensing, and ministering the word for this or that purpose which it is to effect. Certainly Christ says, "Search the Scriptures," but He is speaking to the Jews about their Scriptures, and about definite prophecies; how does it follow that because it was the duty of the Jews to examine documents as prophecies, which profess to be prophecies, that therefore we are meant to gather our doctrines from documents which do

not profess to be doctrinal? Besides, when Christ told them to search the Scriptures for notices of Himself, He had vouchsafed already to present Himself before them; He was a living comment on those Scriptures to which He referred. What He was to be, was *not* understood before He appeared. The case is the same with Christian doctrine now. The Creed confronts Scripture, and seems to say to us, "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of me." But if we attempt to gain the truth of doctrine without the Creed, perchance we shall not be more successful in our search than were the Jews in seeking Christ before He came, yet under circumstances different from theirs, in which knowledge is necessary to salvation, and error is a sin.

Enough has now been said on the theory of Private Judgment. I conclude then that there is neither natural probability, nor supernatural promise, that individuals reading Scripture for themselves, to the neglect of other means when they can have them, will, because they pray for a blessing, be necessarily led into a knowledge of the true and complete faith of a Christian. I conclude that the popular theory of rejecting all other helps and reading the Bible only, though commonly maintained through ignorance, is yet in itself presumptuous. I make but one remark in conclusion. One main reason of the jealousy, with which Christians of this age and country maintain the notion that truth of

doctrine can be gained from Scripture by individuals, is this, that they are unwilling, as they say, to be led by others blindfold. They can possess and read the Scriptures; whereas of Traditions they are no adequate judges, and they dread priest-craft. I am not here to enter into the discussion of this feeling, whether praiseworthy or the contrary. However this be, it does seem a reason for putting before them, if possible, the principal works of the Fathers, translated as Scripture is; that they may have by them what, whether used or not, will be a check upon the growth of an undue dependence on the word of individual teachers, and will be a something to consult, if they have reason to doubt the Catholic character of any tenet to which they are invited to accede.

LECTURE VII.

INSTANCES OF THE ABUSE OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

I PROPOSE now to follow up the remarks last made upon the Abuse of Private Judgment, with some instances in which it has been indulged, and in which, as might be expected antecedently, it has been productive of error, more or less serious, but never insignificant. These instances shall, on the whole, be such as no orthodox Protestant shall be able to look at with any satisfaction, and some of them shall be taken from the history of Romanism itself.

Without further preface I enter upon the subject, viz. what are the chief precedents, which past ages afford modern Protestants, of the exercise of Private Judgment upon the text of Scripture to the neglect of Catholic Tradition, and what is their character?

1. First might be instanced many of the errors in matters of fact connected with the Scripture history, which got current in early times, and, being

mentioned by this or that Father, now improperly go by the name of Traditions, whereas they seem really to have originated in a misunderstanding of Scripture. Such, for instance, is the report recorded by Irenæus, and coming, as he conceived, on good authority, that our Saviour lived to be forty or fifty. Such is Clement's statement that St. Paul was married; such is that of Clement and Justin, that our Lord was deformed in person. These make out no claim to be considered Apostolical, whereas they do singularly coincide severally with certain texts in Scripture which admit of being distorted so as to countenance them [1]. Such again probably in no slight degree are the early opinions concerning the Millennium; certainly in Egypt in the third century they seem to have had their origin in a misconstruction of Scripture [2].

If these various opinions did really thus arise, it is a very curious circumstance that they should now be imputed to Tradition, nay, and adduced, as they are popularly, as if palmary refutations of its claims; whereas they really arose from the circumstance of either going solely by Scripture, or with but scanty and insufficient guidance from Tradition. But even though they were not mere deductions from Scripture, still such local rumours about matters of fact cannot be put on a level with Catholic Tradition concerning matters of doctrine.

[1] John viii. 57. 1 Cor. ix. 5. Is. lii. 14. liii. 2.

[2] Euseb. Hist. vii. 24.

2. The controversy about Baptism in which St. Cyprian was engaged, and in which, according to our own received opinion, he was mistaken, is a clearer and more important instance in point. Cyprian maintained that persons baptized by heretical clergy, must, on being reconciled to the Church, be re-baptized, or rather that their former Baptism was invalid. The Roman Church of the day held that confirmation was sufficient in such cases, as if that ordinance, on the part of the true Church, recognized and ratified the outward act, already administered by heretics, and applied the inward grace bound up in the Sacrament, but hitherto not enjoyed by the parties receiving it. And she rested her doctrine simply on Apostolical Tradition, which by itself might fairly be taken as a sufficient witness in such a point. Cyprian did not profess any Apostolical Tradition on his side, but he *argued from Scripture* against the judgment of the Roman See. His argument and that of his countrymen was of the following kind:—"'There is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;' the heretics have not the one Faith, therefore they have not the one Baptism."—Again, "'There is one Body, one Spirit, one Baptism;' the one Baptism of the one Spirit is in the one Church, therefore there is no Baptism out of it." "Christ has said, 'He who is not with Me, is against Me,' and St. John, that they who go out from us are antichrists; how can they confer the grace of Baptism?" "There are not two Bap-

tisms; he who recognizes that of heretics, invalidates his own." "'No one can receive any thing but what is given him from heaven;' if heresy, then, be from heaven, then, and then only, can it confer Baptism." "'God heareth not sinners;' a heretic is a sinner; how then can his Baptism be acknowledged by God[1]?" Such are the texts with which the African Church defended themselves in Cyprian's days; and who will not allow, with great speciousness? Cyprian himself says in like manner, "Usage is of no force where reason is against it[2];" nor is it, where reason is clear and usage is modern. Yet, after all, however this be, here is a case, where the mere arguing from Scripture without reference to Tradition, (whether voluntarily neglected or not), led to a conclusion which Protestants now will grant to be erroneous.

3. Again, all members of the English Church at least consider Arianism to be a fatal error; yet, when its history is examined, this peculiarity will be found respecting it, that it appealed only to Scripture, not to Catholic Tradition. I do not mean to say, it allowed that no one ever held it, before its historical rise; but that it did not profess, nay, it did not care to have the Church Universal on its side. It set itself against what was received, and

[1] Tertull. de Baptismo 15. Concil. Carthag. apud Cyprian. pp. 230—240.

[2] Cypr. ad Quint. Ep. 71. ed. Bened.

owed its successes to the dexterity with which it argued from certain texts of the Old and New Testament. I will not enlarge on what is notorious. Arianism certainly professed in its day to be a scriptural religion.

4. Another opinion, which, though not an heresy, will be granted by the majority of Protestants to be an error, is the tenet with which the great St. Austin's name is commonly connected. He, as is generally known, is, among the ancient Fathers, the Master of Predestinarianism, that is, of the theological opinion that certain persons are irreversibly ordained to persevere unto eternal life. He was engaged in controversy with the Pelagians, and it is supposed, that in withstanding them he was hurried into the opposite extreme. Now it is remarkable that in his treatises on the subject, he argues from Scripture, and never appeals to Catholic Tradition. For instance, in his work on the Gift of Perseverance he speaks as follows:—

"The enemy of grace presses on, and urges in all ways to make it believed that it is given according to our deserts, and so 'grace should no longer be grace;' and are we loth to say what *with the testimony of Scripture* we can say? I mean, do we fear, lest, if we so speak, some one may be offended, who cannot embrace the truth; and not rather fear lest, if we are silent, some one who is able to embrace it, may be embraced by error instead? For either Predestination is so to be preached, *as Holy*

Scripture plainly reveals it, that in the predestined the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, *or* we must confess that the grace of God is given according to our deserts, as the Pelagians consider."

Here it is curious indeed to see, how closely he follows St. Cyprian's pattern, in his mode of conducting his argument, viz., a reference to certain texts of Scripture, and (if I may say it of such holy men) a venturesome, *à priori*, or at least abstract, course of reasoning. But now let us see how he treats the objection which was made to him, that his doctrine "was contrary to the opinion of the Fathers and the Ecclesiastical sense." He speaks as follows:—

"*Why should we not*, when we read in commentators of God's word, of His prescience, and of the calling of the elect, understand thereby this same Predestination? For, perhaps, they preferred the word prescience because it is more easily understood, while it does not oppose, nay, agrees with the truth which is preached concerning the Predestination of grace. Of this I am sure, that *no one could have disputed* against this Predestination, *which we maintain, according to the Holy Scriptures*, without an error. Yet I think those persons who ask for the opinions of commentators on this subject, *ought to have been contented* with those holy men, celebrated every where for Christian faith and doctrine, Cyprian and Ambrose, whose clear testimo-

nies we have given. They ought to have taken them as sufficient authorities both for believing thoroughly, and preaching thoroughly, as is fitting, that the grace of God is free; and also for considering that preaching is quite consistent with exhorting the indolent and rebuking the wicked: inasmuch as of these two Saints, the one says concerning God's grace, 'We must boast of nothing, for nothing is our own,' and the other, 'our heart and our thoughts are not in our power,' and yet they do not cease to exhort and rebuke, in behalf of the divine precepts." After quoting some additional passages from these two Fathers, he proceeds, "What do we seek clearer from commentators of the word of God, *if it be our pleasure to hear from them, what is plain in the Scriptures?* However, to these two, who ought to be enough, we will add a third, St. Gregory, who witnesses that both faith in God and the confession of that faith, are God's gift, in these words:—'Confess, I beseech you, the Trinity of the one Godhead, or (if you prefer to say it), the one nature; and God shall be implored to vouchsafe you voice to confess what you believe. He will give, doubtless; He who gave what comes first, will give what comes second;' He who gave to believe, will give to confess[1]."

What makes the failure of this appeal to the previous belief of the Church still more remarkable,

[1] De dono Persever. 40, 41. 48, 49. Prosp. ad Aug. Ep. 225.

is the clear view St. Austin possesses of the value of Catholic Tradition, and the force with which he can urge it against an adversary on a proper occasion. Here, then, we are furnished with a serious lesson of the mischief of deducing from the sacred text against the authority of Tradition. If the doctrine of irrespective Predestination has done harm, and created controversy in the Church, let it not be forgotten that this has arisen from exercising private judgment upon Scripture, to the neglect of the Catholic sense.

5. My next instance shall be the Roman doctrine of Purgatory. All Protestants are sufficiently alive to the seriousness of this error. Now I think it may be shown that its existence is owing to the same indulgence of human reason and of private judgment upon Scripture, in default of Catholic Tradition. That it was no received opinion during the first ages of the Gospel, has often been shown, and need not be dwelt on here. Hardly one or two short passages of one or two Fathers for six centuries can be brought in its favour, and those, at the most, rather suggesting than teaching it. In truth, the doctrine seems to have occurred to them, as it has been received generally since, first from the supposed *need* of such a provision in the revealed scheme,—from (what may be called) its naturalness in the judgment of reason; and next in consequence of the misinterpretation of certain texts; as I propose to explain at some length.

How Almighty God will deal with the mass of Christians, who are neither very bad nor very good, is a problem with which we are not concerned, and which it is our wisdom, and may be our duty, to put from our thoughts. But when it has once forced itself upon the mind, we are led, in self-defence, with a view of keeping ourselves from dwelling unhealthily on particular cases which come under our experience, and perplex us, to imagine modes, not by which God *does*, (for that would be presumption to conjecture), but by which He *may* solve the difficulty. Most men, to our apprehensions, are too unformed in religious habits either for heaven or hell; yet there is no middle state, when Christ comes in judgment. In consequence it was obvious to have recourse to the interval before His coming, as a time during which this incompleteness might be remedied; a season, not of changing the spiritual bent and character of the soul departed, whatever that be, for probation ends with mortal life, but of developing it into a more determinate form, whether of good or of evil. Again, when the mind once allows itself to speculate, it would discern in such a provision, a means whereby those, who, not without true faith at bottom, yet have committed great crimes; or those who have been carried off in youth, while still undecided; or who die after a barren though not an immoral or scandalous life, may receive such chastisement as may prepare them for heaven, and

render it consistent with God's justice to admit them thither. Again, the inequality of the sufferings of Christians in this life, compared one with another, would lead the unguarded mind to the same speculations; the intense suffering, for instance, which some men undergo on their death-bed, seeming as if but an anticipation, in their case, of what comes after death upon others, who without greater claims on God's forbearance, have lived without chastisement and die easily. I say, the mind will inevitably dwell upon such thoughts, unless it has been taught to subdue them by education or by the experience of their dangerousness.

Various suppositions have, accordingly, been made, as *pure* suppositions, as mere specimens of the capabilities, (if one may so speak,) of the Divine Dispensation, as efforts of the mind, reaching forward and venturing beyond its depth, into the abyss of the Divine Counsels. If one supposition could be produced to satisfy the problem, ten thousand others were conceivable; unless, indeed, the resources of God's Providence are exactly commensurate with man's discernment of them. Religious men, amid these searchings of heart, have naturally gone to Scripture for relief; to see if the inspired word any where gave them any clue for their inquiries. And hence, and from the speculations of reason upon what was there found, various notions have been hazarded at different times; for

instance, that there is a certain momentary ordeal to be undergone by all men after this life, more or less severe according to their spiritual state;—or that certain gross sins in good men will be thus visited, or their lighter failings and habitual imperfections;—or that the very sight of Divine Perfection in the invisible world will be in itself a pain, while it constitutes the purification of the imperfect but believing soul;—or that, happiness admitting of various degrees of intensity, penitents late in life, may sink for ever into a state blissful as far as it goes, but more or less approaching to unconsciousness; infants dying after Baptism may be as gems paving the courts of heaven, or as the living wheels in the Prophet's vision; while matured Saints may excel in capacity of bliss, as well as in dignity, the highest Archangels. Such speculations are dangerous when indulged; the event proves it;—from some of them, in fact, seems to have resulted the doctrine of Purgatory.

Now the texts to which the minds of the primitive Christians seem to have been principally drawn, and from which they ventured to argue in behalf of these vague notions, were these two:—"The fire shall try every man's work," &c., and "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." These texts, with which many more were found to accord, directed their thoughts one way, as making mention of *fire*, whatever was meant by the word, as the instrument of trial and purifica-

tion; and that, at some time between the present time and the judgment, or at the judgment. And accordingly, without, perhaps, having any distinct or consistent meaning in what they said, or being able to say whether they spoke literally or figuratively, and with an indefinite reference to this life as well as to the intermediate state, they sometimes named fire as the instrument of recovering those who had sinned after their Baptism. That this is the origin of the notion of a Purgatorial fire, I gather from these circumstances;—first, that they do frequently insist on the texts in question; next, that they do not agree in the particular sense they put upon them. That they quote them, shows they rest upon them; that they vary in explaining them, that they had no Catholic sense to guide them. Nothing can be clearer, if these facts be so, than that the doctrine of the Purgatorial fire in all its senses, as far as it was more than a surmise, and was rested on argument, was the result of private judgment, exerted, in defect of Tradition, upon the text of Scripture.

A few extracts will at once show the discordance of the Fathers with each other, on this subject, and their dissent, more or less, from modern Rome.

"The Psalmist observes," says Hilary, "that it is difficult, and most perilous to human nature, to desire God's judgments. For, since no one living is clean

in His sight, how can His judgment be an object of desire? Considering we shall have to give account for every idle word, shall we long for the *day of judgment, in which* we must undergo that everliving fire, and those heavy punishments for cleansing the soul from its sins? *Then will a sword pierce the soul of Blessed Mary,* that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. If that Virgin, which could compass God, is to come into the severity of the judgment, who shall venture to desire to be judged of God? Job, when he had finished his warfare with all calamities of man, and had triumphed, who, when tempted, said, 'The Lord gave,' &c., confessed himself but ashes when he heard God's voice from the cloud, and determined that he ought not to speak another word. And who shall venture to desire God's judgments, whose voice from heaven neither so great a Prophet endured, nor the Apostles either, when they were with the Lord in the Mount[1]?"

Lactantius says, "When *He judges the just,* He shall try them in the fire. Then they whose sins prevail in weight or number, will be tortured in the fire, and burnt in the extremities; but they, who are mature in righteousness and ripeness of virtue, shall not feel that flame, for they have somewhat of God within them, to repel and throw off the force of it. Such is the power of innocence,

[1] Tract in Ps. cxviii. 3 § 12.

that from it that fire recoils without harm, as having received a mission from God to burn the irreligious, to retire from the righteous [1]."

Augustine, who approaches more nearly to the present Roman doctrine, speaks thus doubtfully:— "Such a suffering, too, *it is not incredible*, may happen after this life, and it is a fair question, whether it can be settled or not, whether some Christians, according to their love of the perishing goods of this world, attain salvation more slowly or speedily through a certain purgatorial fire [2]?"

As this doctrine, thus suggested by certain striking texts, grew into popularity and definiteness, and verged towards its present Roman form, it seemed a key to many others. Great portions of the books of Psalms, Job, and the Lamentations, which express the feelings of religious men under suffering, would powerfully recommend it by the forcible, and most affecting and awful meaning which they received from it. When this was once suggested, all other meanings would seem tame and inadequate.

To these must be added various passages from the prophets; as that in the beginning of the 3rd chapter of Malachi, which speaks of fire as the instrument of judgment and purification when Christ comes to visit His Church.

Moreover, there were other texts of obscure and

[1] Div. Instit. vii. 21.

[2] Enchir. 69.

indeterminate bearing, which seemed on this hypothesis to receive a profitable meaning; such as our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount,—"Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing;" and St. John's expression in the Apocalypse, that "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither *under the earth*, was able to open the book [1]."

Further, the very circumstance that no second instrument of a plenary and entire cleansing from sin was given after Baptism, such as Baptism, led Christians to expect that that unknown means, when accorded, would be of a more painful nature than that which they had received so freely and instantaneously in infancy; and confirmed, not only the text already cited, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" but also St. Paul's announcement of the "judgment and fiery indignation" which await those who sinned after having been once enlightened, and Christ's warning to the impotent man to sin no more, "lest a worse thing come unto him."

Lastly: the universal and apparently Apostolical custom of praying for the dead in Christ, called for some explanation, the reasons for it not having come down to posterity with it. Various reasons may be supposed quite clear of this distressing doc-

[1] Matt. v. 26. Rev. v. 3.

trine; but it supplied an adequate and a most constraining motive for its observance, to those who were not content to practise it in ignorance.

I do not wish to frame a theory, but anyhow so far seems undeniable, whatever becomes of the rest, and it is all that it concerns me to show, that there was no Catholic Tradition for Purgatory in early times, and that, instead of it, certain texts of Scripture, interpreted by individuals, were put forward as the proof of the doctrine.

6. One more instance shall be adduced from the history of the Church, of an error introduced professedly on grounds of Scripture without the safeguard of Catholic Tradition,—the doctrine of the Pope's universal Bishoprick; though in treating it I shall be obliged to touch on a large subject in a cursory way, which is scarcely desirable amid the present popular misapprehensions about it.

That St. Peter was the head of the Apostles and the centre of unity, and his successors are the honorary Primates of Christendom, in the same general sense in which London (for instance) is the first city in the British Empire, I neither affirm nor deny, for to make a clear statement and then to defend it, would carry us away too far from our main subject. But for argument's sake I will here grant that the Fathers assert it. But what there is not the shadow of a reason for saying that they held, what has not the faintest pretensions of being a Catholic truth, is this, that St. Peter or his suc-

cessors were and are universal Bishops, that they have the whole of Christendom for their one diocese in a way in which other Apostles and Bishops had and have not, that they are Bishops of Bishops in such sense as belongs to no other Bishop; in fact, that the difference between St. Peter and the Popes after him, and other Bishops, is not one of mere superiority and degree, but of kind, not of rank, but of class. This the Romanists hold; and they do not hold it by Catholic Tradition; by what then? by private interpretation of Scripture.

They will say that the texts in their favour are so very strong, that it is not wonderful that they should quote them. If so, Protestants who rely on what they think strong texts, must see to that; I am not here engaged in refuting the Romanists; I am taking for granted they are wrong; and addressing those who know they are wrong, who know and are sure that their texts do not prove their point, even supposing they look strong, but who yet do not see how best to meet them. To such persons, I would point out, before going into the consideration of these texts at all, that they have been gained by using that mischievous but very popular principle among us, that in serious matters we may interpret Scripture by Private Judgment, whether the judgment of the individual, or of the day, or of the age, or of the country, or of the civil magistrate, or of the science in fashion, or of carnal criticism, (for it matters not which it may be, they are all

one) and not by Catholic Tradition. And this I will say, that if the Romanists make converts in this country, it will be more by the bold misinterpretation of one or two strong texts, which Protestants have superciliously put aside or explained away, than by any broad recommendations or well-connected arguments which they can produce.

The texts, I need not say, are such as these,—"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

Again. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

And again. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs." And He repeats twice, "Feed My sheep," with the same question before it.

From these passages, the Romanists argue, that St. Peter, with the Popes after him, is the rock or

foundation of the Church, as Christ's representative; that all Christians, including the Apostles, are committed to him and them as sheep by our Lord and Saviour; and that he is especially the keeper and preserver of his brethren's faith.

Now, that no pretence of Catholic Tradition has led to the establishment of this doctrine, I will show from the testimony of two Popes, of very different ages, the one of the sixth, the other of the fifteenth century; the former of whom shall witness that it was not a Catholic doctrine, the latter that it was founded on the wrong interpretation of Scripture.

The evidence of the former of these, St. Gregory, surnamed the Great, is continually used in the controversy; yet it is so striking that I will here introduce it, using for that purpose the words of Leslie. 'The Pope,' says that able writer, "not being content with that primacy which by the constitution of the Western Church had been affixed to his see, for the better and more easy regulation and carrying on the commerce and correspondence, and managing the jurisdiction of the Episcopal College, and which was granted to him only *jure ecclesiastico*," by ecclesiastical right, "did set up for an universal and unlimited supremacy, and that *jure divino*," by divine right, "over all his colleagues, the Bishop of the whole Catholic Church; making all their authority depend upon him alone, and thereby resolving the power of the whole Episcopal College into the single see of Rome. This is

one of the new doctrines of Rome. It was not known there in the days of Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, who died in the seventh century. Then it first began to be set up by John, Bishop of Constantinople, after the seat of the empire was translated thither. And Gregory the Great wrote severely against it; he calls it a novel doctrine, which had never been known at Rome, or pretended to by any of her Bishops; that it was against the doctrine of the Gospel, against the decrees of the Canons, against the rights of all other Bishops and of all Churches; a horrible injury and scandal to the whole universal Church; that the Bishops were the stars of God, and whoever sought to advance his throne above them, did in that imitate the pride of Lucifer, and was the forerunner of Antichrist; whose times, he said, he then saw approaching, by this most wicked and tyrannical usurpation of one Bishop above all the rest of his colleagues, and to 'style himself Patriarch of almost the whole Ecumenical Church.' . . . And Gregory does not only thus severely inveigh against this usurpation, but gives excellent reasons against it; he says, 'If one Bishop be called universal, the universal Church falls, if that universal Bishop falls.' 'But,' says he, 'let that blasphemous name be abhorrent to the hearts of all Christians, by which the honour of all Bishops is taken away, while it is madly arrogated by one to himself[1].' "

[1] Leslie. Case of the Regale et Pontificale, 16.

Such is the witness of that great prelate to whom we owe the line of our own primates to this day; so little did he think of claiming that power over us which his successors exercised. Nearly nine centuries after his time, Æneas Sylvius was consecrated Bishop in his see, under the title of Pius II.; and he, in a work written before he was Pope, had spoken as follows, as Leslie quotes him: "It is the *opinion of all that are dead*, if that can be called a mere opinion which is fortified with sufficient authorities, that the Pope of Rome is subject to the universal Church; neither dare those who now live deny it. But it is made a doubt among some whether he be subject also to a General Council; for there are some, whether out of singularity, or that they expect the rewards of their flattery, have begun to spread *new and strange* doctrines, and are not afraid to exempt the Pope from the jurisdiction of the Holy Council; for ambition has blinded them; from whence not only this modern, but all schisms to this day have arisen. . . . These poor men do not consider that these things they say are but the words either of Popes who would extend their power, or of their flatterers; and because such sayings are easily answered, *they straight run to the Gospel, and interpret the words of Christ*, not according to the meaning of the Holy Ghost, but *by their private judgment*. And they make much of that which was said to Peter, 'Thou shalt be called Cephas;' *by which* they make him head of the Church; and, 'I will give unto thee the keys of the king-

dom of heaven;' and, 'Whatsoever thou bindest upon earth;' and, 'I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not;' and, 'Feed My sheep;' and, 'Launch out into the deep;' and, 'Fear not, thou shalt henceforth catch men;' and that Christ commanded Peter alone, as Prince of the Apostles, to pay tribute for himself and for Him; and because Peter drew the net to shore full of great fishes; and that Peter alone drew his sword in defence of Christ. *All which things these men after a strange manner do refine upon, wholly neglecting the expositions of the Holy Doctors* [1]."

Enough has now been said in illustration of errors arising from the exercise of Private Judgment on the text of Scripture. The practical conclusion is obvious. Let those whom it concerns be cautious how they countenance a procedure which has led, not only to Arianism, but to tenets which Protestants of every denomination will agree in condemning,—Purgatory and the Pope's Supremacy.

[1] Leslie, Ibid.

LECTURE VIII.

THE INDEFECTIBILITY OF THE CHURCH CATHOLIC.

Let us now return to the subject of Church Authority, from which the discussion of Private Judgment has diverted us. As I have already implied [1], Private Judgment and Church Authority, in matters of faith, do not, in principle, interfere with each other. The Church enforces, on her own responsibility, what is an historical fact, and ascertainable as other facts, and obvious to the intelligence of inquirers, as other facts; viz., the doctrine of the Apostles; and Private Judgment has as little exercise here as in any matters of sense or experience. It may as well claim a right of denying that the Apostles existed, or that the Bible exists, as that that doctrine existed and exists. We are not free to sit at home and speculate about every thing; there are things which we look at, or ask about, if

[1] Lecture V.

we are to know them. Some things are matters of opinion, others of inquiry. The simple question is, whether the Church's doctrine is Apostolic, and how far Apostolic. Now if we could agree in our answer, from examining Scripture, as we one and all agree about the general events of life, it would be well; but since we do not, we must have recourse to such sources as will enable us to do so, if there be such; and such, I would contend, is Ecclesiastical Antiquity. There is, then, no intricacy and discordance of claims between the Church and Private Judgment in the abstract; the Church enforces a fact—Apostolical Tradition—as the doctrinal key to Scripture, and Private Judgment expatiates beyond the limits of that Tradition; both the one and the other on its own responsibility.

I have said the Church's Authority in enforcing doctrine extends only so far as that doctrine is Apostolic, and therefore true; and that the evidence of this is in kind the same as that on which we believe the Apostles lived, laboured, and suffered. But this leads to a further and higher view of the subject, to which I shall devote the present Lecture.

Not only is the Church Catholic bound to teach the Truth, but she is ever divinely guided to teach it; her witness of the Christian Faith is a matter of promise as well as of duty; her discernment of it is secured by a heavenly as well as a human rule.

She is indefectible in it, and therefore not only has authority to enforce, but is of authority in declaring it. This, it is obvious, is a much more inspiring contemplation than any I have hitherto mentioned. The Church not only transmits the faith by human means, but has a supernatural gift for that purpose; that doctrine, which is true, considered as an historical fact, is true also because she teaches it.

In illustration of this subject, I shall first consider two passages in our received formularies.

First; in the 20th Article we are told that the Church has "*authority* in controversies of faith." Now these words certainly do not merely mean that she has authority to enforce such doctrines as can historically be proved to be Apostolical. They do not speak of her power of enforcing truth, or of her power of enforcing at all, but say that she has "authority in controversies;" whereas, if this authority depended on the mere knowledge of an historical fact, and much more if only on her persuasion in a matter of opinion, any individual of competent information has the same in his place and degree. The Church, then, according to this Article, has a power which individuals have not; a power, not merely as the ruling principle of a society, to admit and reject members, not simply a power of imposing tests, but simply "authority in controversies of faith." But how can she have this authority unless she be certainly true in her decla-

rations? She can have no authority in declaring a lie. Matters of doctrine are not like matters of usage or custom, founded on expedience, and determinable by discretion. They appeal to the conscience, and the conscience is subject to Truth alone. It recognizes and follows nothing but what comes to it with the profession of Truth. To say the Church has authority, and yet is not true, as far as it has authority, were to destroy liberty of conscience, which Protestantism in all its forms holds especially sacred; it were to substitute something besides Truth as the sovereign lord of conscience, which would be tyranny. If this Protestant principle is not surrendered in the Article, which no one supposes it to be, the Church is to a certain point there set forth as the organ or representative of Truth, and its teaching is identified with it.

Our reception of the Athanasian Creed is another proof of our holding the infallibility of the Church, as some of our Divines express it, in matters of saving faith. In that Creed it is unhesitatingly said, that certain doctrines are necessary to be believed in order to salvation; they are minutely and precisely described; no room is left for Private Judgment; none for any examination into Scripture, with the view of discovering them. Next, if we inquire the *ground* of this authority in the Church, the Creed answers, that she speaks merely as the organ of the *Catholic* voice, and that the faith thus wit-

nessed, is, as being thus witnessed, such, that whoso does not believe it faithfully, cannot be saved. "Catholic," then, and "saving" are taken as synonymous terms; in other words, the Church Catholic is pronounced to have been all along, and by implication, as destined ever to be, the guardian of the pure and undefiled faith, or to be indefectible in that faith.

If it be inquired whether this doctrine does not entrench upon the prerogative of Scripture, as containing all things necessary to salvation, I answer, no; for else, one portion of our formularies would be inconsistent with another. And, in truth, there is obviously no inconsistency whatever in saying, first, that Scripture contains the Saving Faith; and, next, that the Church Catholic has ever preached it; though, doubtless, it would be inconsistent to say, first, that the Church Catholic has ever preached the Saving Faith; next, that each individual is intended to draw it for himself from Scripture; but this our formularies do not say.

We do not, therefore, set up the Church against Scripture,—but we make her the keeper and interpreter of Scripture. And Scripture itself conveys to the Church the charter of her office to be so.

Out of a number of texts, bearing more or less on the subject, I select the following:—

"The Church of the Living God, the *pillar and*

ground of the Truth."—"He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, *till* we all come *in the unity of the Faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, in order that we henceforth be *no more children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine*." Again, "As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever [1]."

In these passages, let it be observed, the Church is declared to be the great and special support of the Truth, her various functionaries are said to be means towards the settlement of diversities and uncertainty of doctrine, and securing unity of faith; and a direct promise is vouchsafed her that the word of Truth committed to her shall never be lost, and that, in consequence of the ever-present care and guidance of the Holy Ghost. How Protestant sectaries understand these passages, I know not; how, for instance, the first cited is understood at all, by those who deny a visible Church. On the

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 15. Eph. iv. 11—14. Is. lix. 21.

other hand, if a visible Church only can be a stay and maintenance of the Truth, and if therefore a visible Church is spoken of in it, let us reflect how high an office, how august and magnificent a privilege is there assigned her! Did not St. Paul speak in these words, of a something existing in his day? Does not what he then spoke of, still exist in the same sense in which the children of Israel, who were once called out of Egypt, now exist? and would it not be just as extravagant to say that the threats uttered upon Israel in Scripture, were not fulfilled in the Israel we see, as to deny that the promises made to the Church Catholic in Scripture, are not fulfilled in the Church we see? Surely, then, the Spirit of Almighty God is expressly pledged to her for the maintenance of the one Faith, from generation to generation, even to the end!

Such is the doctrine of our most considerable Divines, and such the grounds of it, both in Scripture and in our formularies; but here we encounter a difficulty. Romanists and Protestant sectaries combine in resisting our interpretation of the foregoing texts. Both parties agree as far as this, that such passages either mean a great deal more than we make them, or nothing at all. The Protestant of the day considers them to mean nothing; the Romanist sees in them the doctrine of the Church's Infallibility: but both parties unite in charging us with taking up an interpretation on no principle; with stopping where we stop without

meaning; with adopting a middle, timid path; with receiving the promises only so far as we dare, and are constrained; confessing them when we are pressed by argument, and retracting our confession when the need is over; committing ourselves to all the odium of the Roman view, without what even its enemies own to be its redeeming points; being arrogant without pretension, and ambitious without an object. Accordingly they call upon us to retreat, or, since we have gone so far, to go further. The Protestant sectary alleges that we differ from the Romanist only in minute and unintelligible points; the Romanist retorts, on the other hand, that in heart we are Protestants, but are obliged in controversy to raise our tone in order to evade the force of his arguments from Antiquity. Such is the position of the *Via Media*.

We are accused, it seems, of drawing fine, and over-subtle distinctions; as if, like the Semi-arians of old, we were neither on the one side nor the other. The following remarks on the general subject of the promises made to the Church Catholic, are made with the hope of showing that our distinctive peculiarities are not matters of words and names, but are realities.

The texts above quoted are considered by the Romanist to prove the Infallibility of the Church in all matters of faith, and general morals. They certainly will *bear* so to be interpreted, it cannot be denied: and if this be so, why, it may be asked,

do we not interpret them as the Romanists do? I answer by referring to the parallel of the Mosaic Law. God's favour was promised to the Israelites for ever, but has been withdrawn from them. Has God's promise, therefore, failed? or, rather, was it not forfeited by neglect on the part of His people, to perform the conditions on which it was granted? Surely we so account for the rejection of the nation when Christ came. Even supposing, then, for argument's sake, that the promises to the Christian Church be in themselves as ample as the Romanists pretend, perchance they have been since forfeited, or suspended in their measure, by our disobedience[1]. I will explain what I mean.

We Anglicans say, that the Church Catholic will ever retain what is called in Scripture "the Faith," the substance or great outlines of the Gospel as taught by the Apostles, (whatever they are,—which is not the question at present,) and that in consequence of the Scripture promise that the word of God shall never depart out of her mouth. Romanists say that she is pure and spotless in all matters great and small, that she can never decide wrongly on any point of faith and morals, but in every age possesses and teaches explicitly or implicitly the whole truth as it was held by St. Paul or St. John, in spite of all deficiencies in written

[1] Leslie. Works, vol. iii. p. 25—28.

documents or errors in particular writers and periods. Now, I do not see any antecedent reason why such a fulfilment of the prophecy should not have been *intended*, though it has not taken place. It is more reasonable indeed, and more modest, in the first instance to put only a general sense upon the words of the promise, and to view it rather in its great outlines than in detail; yet there is nothing in Scripture or elsewhere to limit it,—there is no rule assignable for determining how much it means and what it cannot mean. So solemn are the promises made to the Church, so ample is the grace pledged to her, so intelligible are the human provisions appointed for their fulfilment, that there surely is no antecedent reason why Almighty God should not have designed to bestow on the Church that perfect purity which the Romanist claims for her. All through the inspired history, we have traces of divine intentions mysteriously frustrated. It was purposed that the Jewish people should receive, preach, and dispense the Gospel; it was not fulfilled. It was announced beforehand to the Christian Church, that "her people should be all righteous," whereas iniquity has abounded. "The wolf was to dwell with the lamb, and the leopard to lie down with the kid;" and there have been endless wars and fightings. God's promises depend on man's co-operation for their fulfilment in detail; and though they are ever fulfilled in such measure as to satisfy the formal wording of them, they have

a large or a small extent of blessing, they expand or contract according to our reception of them, and often admit of more meaning than the event elicits from them. The promise that the word of truth should not depart out of the mouth of the Church, is *satisfied* in what we see fulfilled at this day, *viz.* in the whole Church in all its branches having ever maintained the faith in its essential outlines; nay, it might be satisfied even in a much scantier fulfilment,—for instance, though this were all, (which many think to be its highest meaning) that there should always be *in* the Church *some* true believers. This, I say, might be enough; still, supposing it, yet perchance the promise may have originally meant more than what the letter requires, *viz.* as much as has actually been fulfilled; and, if so, perhaps even more than that. God's thoughts are deeper than human words; they cannot be exhausted. The more you ask, the higher you aim, the more faithfully you expect, the more diligently you co-operate, the fuller return you obtain. The man of God was angry with Joash, king of Israel, for smiting on the ground but thrice, and then staying; and he said, "Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it; whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice [1]." If the Christian Church was intended to come on earth in the power and

[1] 2 Kings xiii. 19.

spirit of Christ Himself, her Lord and Defender, if she was to manifest Him mystically before the eyes and in the souls of men who is on the right hand of God, if her glory was to be like that of heaven, though invisible, her reign eternal, and her kingdom universal, if she was destined to compel the nations with an irresistible sway, smiting and withering them if rebellious, though not with earthly weapons, and shedding upon the obedient overflowing peace, and the holiest and purest blessings, it is not extravagant to suppose that she was also destined to an authoritative ministry of the word which has never been realized. And that these prospects have been disappointed, may be owing, as in the case of the Jews, to her misconduct. She may have forfeited in a measure her original privileges.

Nay, the parallel of Judaism is a positive argument in favour of such a supposition; for surely, with the history of Israel before us, and the actual recorded sins of the Christian Church, we may pronounce it improbable that those sins have forfeited nothing at all, that they have not influenced her subsequent fortunes, or impaired her invisible, as they undeniably have curtailed her visible powers. Any one who maintains that the Church is all that Christ intended her to be, has the analogy of Judaism full against him. As well may we imagine it was God's intention that the temple should be burned and the Jews should go into captivity, as that Christendom should be what we see it is at

this day. Nor will it avail to argue, that of knowledge at least there was a gradual increase in the Jewish Church, not a diminution, as time went on, so that the parallel does not hold in the point for which I bring it; for this increase was by means of *fresh* revelations, which God imparted rather in spite of the existing Church, and against it, than through it; by the mouth of the Prophets, not of the Priests. And moreover, these successive revelations were in their turn forgotten in course of time, or withdrawn in consequence of the people's sins. By the time of Josiah the book of the Law was lost; by the time of Christ's coming the Evangelical prophecies had been overlaid with Pharisaical Traditions.

I have said, that arguing from the history of Judaism, it is not improbable antecedently, rather the reverse, that the Christian Church has forfeited a portion of the promises; but we shall find, I think, in the New Testament that the promise to her was suspended more or less upon a condition which for many centuries she has actually broken. This condition is Unity, which is made by Christ and His Apostles, as it were, the sacramental channel through which all the gifts of the Spirit, not the least that of purity of doctrine, are derived to the Church. It is not necessary to do more than allude to the abundant evidence which the New Testament furnishes on this subject. Unity may be called the especial badge of Christ's

disciples and the tenure of their privileges. "By this," He says, "*shall all men know* that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Again, "Where two or three are *gathered together in My name*, there am I in the midst of them." He prays for His Apostles, and through them for all believers, "that they may be One," as He is in His Father; or, as His own words stand, "that they all may be One, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be One in Us. . . The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be One, even as We are One, I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One, *that the world may know* that Thou hast sent Me." In these words, a visible unity, a unity such as the world could recognize, whatever depths it has besides, is made the token, or the condition, as we view it, of that glory in which the Church was to be clad.

Again: consider the following passages from St. Paul's Epistles. It will be found that the grace of the two Sacraments, the faith of the Gospel, the renewal of the heart, all the privileges given us, are there represented as in connection with unity; whether as cause, or as effect, or collaterally, matters not to our present purpose. "By One Spirit are we all baptized into One *Body*; . . . and have been all made to drink into One Spirit." "There is One *Body*, One Spirit, One Faith." "Stand fast in One Spirit, with one mind striving together for

the Faith of the Gospel." "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ... ye are all One in Christ Jesus." "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him; where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in One *Body*."

Surely these passages of Scripture express most strongly the dependence, nay, considering our Lord's words, the essential dependence of the privileges of the Gospel upon a visible as well as a moral unity. The one image of Christ, the seal of the covenant, which must be impressed on all who would be saved, is then only stamped upon His disciples when they are brought together or viewed in one, and by their separation and discord, it is broken asunder. The instances recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, do but corroborate this doctrine.

The Holy Ghost originally descended, when the Apostles "were *all with one accord in one place;*" and, on another occasion, when "they lifted up their voice to God *with one accord*," "the place was shaken *where they were assembled together*, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness." In like manner, in their synodical letter to the Churches, they speak of its "seeming good to the Holy Ghost and to them," after they were "*assembled with one accord*[1]."

And the very passages in the Prophets which have led to these remarks, tend to the same conclusion. The promises therein contained are made to the Church as One, not to two, or three, or a dozen bodies; and here we may make use of the very argument commonly urged by Romanists against us. They ask triumphantly, "*which* is the One true and Infallible Church?" implying that if Scripture names but one, it must be theirs; but we may answer that since the Church is now not one, it is not infallible; since the *one* has become in one sense *many*, the full prophetical idea is not now fulfilled; and, with the idea, is lost the full description, and the attribute of Infallibility in particular, supposing that were ever included in it.

This then is the conclusion we arrive at; that the Church Catholic, being no longer one in the fullest sense, does not enjoy her predicted privileges

[1] Acts ii. 1. iv. 24—31. xv. 25. 28.

in the fullest sense. And that purity of doctrine is one of the privileges thus infringed, is plain from the simple fact that the separate branches of the Church do disagree with each other in the details of faith; discordance among witnesses of the truth, which once was not, being the visible proof of its being impaired, as well as the sacramental cause of it. Further it may be remarked, that since the duty of unity admits of fuller or scantier fulfilment, it does not follow, though it has been broken in its higher sense, that therefore it is altogether lost, and its privileges with it; or again, that it is lost in the same sense by every kind of infringement, or in the same degree in every place. The meeting of "two or three" private men in Christ's name, is one kind of fulfilment, and in default of higher opportunities, may be attended under any circumstances with a portion of divine blessing. Again, the unity of the ministerial succession may be the tenure on which the sacred mysteries of faith are continued to us, as seems probable both from the history of the Church, and from the circumstance that both to that Ministry and to that fundamental Faith continuance is promised to the end of the world. Higher measures of truth may be attached to a unity of jurisdiction and external order; while the highest of all, amounting to a continual Infallibility, were it ever intended, might require the presence of a superhuman charity and peace which has never been witnessed since the

time when the disciples "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," and "had all things common, selling their possessions and goods, and parting them to all men, as every man had need, and continued daily with one accord in the temple," and ate their celestial food "with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people[1]."

If this view of the subject be in the main correct, it would follow that the Ancient Church will be our model in all matters of doctrine, till it broke up into portions, and for Catholic agreement substituted peculiar and local opinions; but that since that time the Church has possessed no fuller measure of the truth than we see it has at this day, viz. merely the fundamental faith. And such appears to be the principle adopted by our own writers, in their disputes concerning those questions in the superstructure of faith in which our Church differs from her sisters elsewhere. They refer to those times when the Church spoke but one language; they refer to Antiquity, as the period when all Christians agreed together in faith. And thus we shall be able to answer the question commonly put to us by Romanists concerning the date of their corruptions. They consider it fair to call upon us to show *when* their doctrines, supposing them errors,

[1] Acts ii. 42—47.

were introduced, as if the impossibility of our doing this accurately, would be a proof that they were not introductions. They challenge us to draw the line between the pure and corrupt ages of the Church; and, when we reply discordantly, they triumph in what they consider a virtual refutation of our charge. They argue that what betrays no signs in history of being introduced was never introduced, but is part of the original Gospel; and when we object the silence of Antiquity concerning the Roman doctrines, they retort upon us what they allege to be a similar silence in history concerning their rise. Now, let us apply to this argument the foregoing considerations on the subject of unity. Are not Christians for certain divided now? as Romanists themselves will be the first to acknowledge; then must there have been a time when they began to be divided; even though the year and the day cannot be pointed out, and we differ one with another in determining it. Now, it is upon this very fact of the schism that I ground the corruption of doctrine; the one has taken place when and so far as the other has taken place, though the history of both the one and the other be unknown. If asked, then, for the point of time when Christian truth began to be impaired, I leave it for Romanists to answer, when Christian unity began to be compromised. We are not bound to assign it. It is a question of degree and place, not to mention the imperfection of historical documents.

Who can trace the formal acts of schism running through the whole Church, and combining, as the jarrings in some material body, to split it into fragments? Let us then clearly understand what is meant by this question. We disclaim the notion that there was any one point of time, at which the Church suddenly sunk into the gulf of error; we do not say she ever so sunk as not to be in a truer sense not sunken; and we think it trifling to ask us for the first rise or the popular introduction of the doctrines we condemn. Granting there are distinct grounds for suspecting them, this is a pure historical question; and, if unanswered, is but an historical obscurity, not a theological difficulty. It is enough if we do just so much as we are able to do in respect to the divisions of the Church, when we point out the formal and public acts of schism and their age and place. To quarrel with us because we do no more, nay, or because we differ among ourselves in a question of dates, is as preposterous as it would be to object to the received interpretation of Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years because three separate commencements may be assigned to the period, or to deny that Daniel's of the seventy weeks was fulfilled in Christ's coming, on account of the difficulties which attend its nice adjustment in detail.

Until, then, Romanists maintain that their Church has not quarrelled with others, as well as kept the faith incorrupt, they gain no triumph in proving

differences among our Divines in what is merely a point of history. Till their Church maintains her own Infallibility as regards matters of fact, they may well bear the errors of individuals among us in a question of that nature. For it is little more than this; since the greater number of our writers, whether they say the Church's faith was first impaired at the end of the fourth century, or in the eighth, still agree in the principle of appealing to those ages which they respectively consider to die within the period of peace and union; and when they seem to differ they are often but speaking of different stages of the long history of error, of its first beginnings, or its establishment, or the public protests against it,—of the earlier time, when truth was universally maintained, or of the later, when error was universal.

Thus, Bishop Ken, for instance, takes in the whole tract of centuries, up to the disunion of the East and West, that is nearly 800 years. Bishop Van Mildert says nearly the same, expressing his belief that "until the great schism between the Eastern and Western Churches, and the full establishment of the Papal usurpation," the Fathers kept before them the duty of contending for the faith and guarding it against heretical innovations[1]. Archbishop Bramhall names 500 years, that is, up to Pope Gregory's mission to England. Bishop Jewell, again,

[1] Bampt. Lect. iv. p. 97.

challenges the Romanists to adduce authority in their favour from the first six centuries. Bishop Hall adopts the same period[1]. The directions given to the Bishops from the Lords of the Council in the year 1582, with a view to their disputations with Jesuits and seminary Priests, observe the same rule, enjoining them, if the latter "shall show any grounds of Scripture and wrest it to their sense," to call for "the interpretation of the old Doctors, such as were before Gregory I., for that in his time began the first claim of the supremacy by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and shortly after was usurped by the Bishop of Rome[2]." Hammond and Stillingfleet are ready to stand by the first six General Councils, which lie between 325 to 680[3]. The act of the first year of Elizabeth especially names the first four, (A.D. 325—451) not however to the exclusion of the fifth and sixth, for which and for others it expressly leaves an opening, but from the great importance of the former, which Pope Gregory, though living after the fifth, compares in their own department to the four Gospels. In like manner four or five centuries are named by other of our writers, not as rejecting thereby a more extended space, but from the notion that in granting it a field of controversy was opened as large as Romanists could desire. And I suppose they could allow,

[1] Conc. ad Clerum. [2] Brett, on Tradition, § 1.
[3] Hammond, vol. i. p. 551. Stillingfleet, vol. vi. p. 650.

that if the age of true Catholicism be extended as far as the end of the fourth century, they would gain little by the addition of the fifth or sixth. If the voluminous remains of that era, including the works of Ambrose, Austin, Jerome, Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nyssen, Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, and Cyril of Jerusalem, will not afford a standard of Catholic doctrine, there seems little profit to be gained from Antiquity at all. Thus Archbishops Laud [1], and Usher by implication [2], specify "four or five hundred years;" while Bishop Stillingfleet [3], still proceeding by the test of unity as already explained, dates the rise of the schism, and therefore of corruption, from the Councils of Constantinople or Chalcedon, that is, places it between A.D. 381 and 451. And in like manner, Waterland specifies the three or four first centuries [4]; and Beveridge also [5], assigning the same reason.

Such is the agreement in principle, such the immaterial discrepancies of our Divines, in determining the limit of that period to which we give the name of Antiquity. The principle is clear, the fact obscure. Different judgments may be formed of the date when the East and West fell into schism, but that "love is the bond of perfectness" will be

[1] On Tradition, p. 53. § 15.

[2] Answer to Jesuit, ch. i.

[3] Stillingfl. Grounds, pp. 38, 39.

[4] Waterland, on Eccles. Antiq. 5. 9.

[5] Beveridge Procem. ad Can.

admitted on all hands. Thus much is clear, that the termination of the era of purity cannot be fixed much earlier than the Council of Sardica, A.D. 347, which an historian of the next century names as the commencement of the division [1], nor so late as the second Nicene or seventh General Council, which was held A.D. 787. Indeed this latter Council has various marks of error upon it, as if they were intended to draw our attention to its want of authority. It was the Council which decreed the worship of images; but this I do not here assume to be a corruption, that being the point in dispute between ourselves and the Romanists. But that it really was a corruption, over and above its variance with Scripture, is proved from the fact, which is historically certain, that it was the meeting, not of the whole Church, but of a mere party in it, and thus has no pretensions to be considered an organ of the Catholic world. Thirty years before, nearly as many Bishops as then assembled, had condemned in Council the usage which it enforced. Seven years after it, a greater number of Bishops assembled in Council at Frankfort, and protested against its decision, which was not fully acknowledged in the West for four hundred years afterwards. Moreover, at this very time, it is not received by the Greeks [2], though they receive the

[1] Sozom. Hist. iii. 13.

[2] Mosheim. Cent. 8. ii. 3. § 12. Spanheim. Ann. Eccles. Cent. 8.

six first Councils as we do. Moreover, this same Council has upon it what we may fairly consider other marks of error, and in which it has also been a precedent for the after innovations of Rome. It was the first general Council which professed to ground its decrees, not on Scripture sanction, but mainly on Tradition; and it was the first which framed as an article of faith, what, whether true or false, was beside and beyond the articles of the Apostles' Creed[1]. So closely did grievous mistakes in ecclesiastical principle, as they will be shown to be in the succeeding Lectures, follow on the breach of Catholic unity. Without insisting then on its decree in favour of image worship, which is the error which especially attaches to it, here are two separate violations of principle incurred in making it. A point of doctrine is made necessary to salvation,—on the one hand, without Scripture warrant,—on the other, beyond the Articles of the Creed. Lastly, it may be remarked, that in the course of the controversy about Images, the Popes disowned the authority of the Emperor, and thus involved themselves in a distinct sin, which led the way to many of those peculiarities by which their monarchical rule was afterwards distinguished.

But whenever the fatal deed took place, it is long done and past, and its effects live to this day. Century after century the Church Catholic has

[1] Stillingfl. vol. vi. p. 450.

become more and more disunited, discordant, and corrupt. Under these circumstances it is a great privilege to know that certain promises are irrevocably made to her; that a gift of perpetuity is pledged to her under all disorders,—of unbroken succession to her ministry, of grace "without repentance," to her ordinances, and (as we humbly trust) of indefectibility to her faith. That original Creed, which St. Paul committed to Timothy, and the first ages considered as the fundamental faith, still remains to us, and to all Christians all over the world; the gates of hell have not prevailed against it. Whatever might formerly have been possessed, of a strictly traditionary nature; whatever of rich, but unsorted and uncatalogued treasures; whatever too sacred, or too subtle to record in words, whether comments on Scripture, or principles of interpreting them, or Apostolic usages; still we have the essentials of faith: and that we have as much as this, considering the numberless hazards to which it has been exposed, is at once a most gracious and a most marvellous appointment of Divine Providence. To the enemies of the Church it is a sign which they "are not able to gainsay nor resist;" and to us an encouragement that, in what we do for her sake, her Maker and Saviour will be with us.

On this subject I am led to quote an impressive passage from the Bampton Lectures of Bishop Van Mildert, who enforces the main principle under

consideration, though treating it more as a fact than as a doctrine.

"If a candid investigation," he says, "be made of the points generally agreed upon by the Church Universal, it will probably be found, that at no period of its history has any fundamental or essential truth of the Gospel been authoritatively disowned. Particular Churches may have added many superstitious observances and many erroneous tenets, to these essential truths; and in every Church, particular individuals, or congregations of individuals, may have tainted large portions of the Christian community with pestilential heresies. But as far as the Church Catholic can be deemed responsible, the substance of sound doctrine still remains undestroyed, at least, if not unimpaired. Let us take, for instance, those articles of faith which have already been shown to be essential to the Christian Covenant—the Doctrines of the Trinity, of our Lord's Divinity and Incarnation, of His Atonement and Intercession, of our Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, of the terms of acceptance, and the Ordinances of the Christian Sacraments and Priesthood. At what period of the Church have these doctrines, or either of them, been by any public act disowned or called in question? We are speaking now, it will be recollected, of what in the language of Ecclesiastical History, is emphatically called THE CHURCH; that, which has from age to age borne rule, upon the ground

of its pretensions to Apostolical Succession. And to this our inquiry is necessarily restricted . . . . But view now, on the other hand, the labours of those who endeavoured to subvert any of these fundamental truths. Observe the parties with whom they originated, and the estimation in which they were holden. No age of the Church has ever been entirely free from attempts to spread pernicious errors. Yet at what period have they ever received its authoritative sanction? Did the Church in primitive times yield one iota of essential doctrine to the Gnostic Heretics? Did it afterwards adopt either the Sabellian, the Arian, or the Macedonian tenets? Did the wild enthusiasm of Manes, or Montanus, and their followers, in any respect influence its Creed? And in later times, when and where have the Socinian notions been recognized as any legitimate authority? Or, what proof can even the disciples of Calvin produce, that his doctrine of arbitrary and irrespective decrees was ever the received persuasion of the Catholic Church? To say nothing of the multitude of lesser divisions of religious opinion, or of those ephemeral productions, of each of which, as of their authors, it might be said, 'in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.' Surely here is something to arrest reflection; something which they who sincerely profess Christianity, and are tenacious of the inviolability of its doctrines, must contemplate with

sentiments of awe and veneration. . . . . How have they withstood the assaults of continued opponents; opponents, wanting neither talents nor inclination to effect their overthrow? If these considerations be deemed insufficient, let the adversary point out by what sure tokens we shall discover any Christian community, duly answering the Apostle's description, that it is 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone[1]?'"

I have said enough, I hope, in the course of this Lecture, by way of distinguishing between our own and the Roman theology, and of showing that neither our concessions to them are reluctantly made, nor our differences subtle and nugatory, as is objected by opponents. Whether we be right or wrong, our theory of religion has a meaning, and that really distinct from Romanism. Both we and Romanists hold that the Church Catholic is unerring in its declarations of faith, or saving doctrine; but we differ from each other as to what is the faith, and what is the Church Catholic. They maintain that faith depends on the Church, we that the Church is built on the faith. By Church Catholic we mean the Church Universal, as descended from the Apostles; they those branches of it which are in communion with Rome. They consider the see of St. Peter, to have a promise of permanence, we the Church

[1] Bampt. Lect. viii.

Catholic and Apostolic. Again, they understand by the Faith, whatever the Church at any time declares to be faith; we what it has actually so declared from the beginning. We hold that the Church Catholic will never depart from those outlines of doctrine which the Apostles formally published; they that she will never depart in any of her acts from that entire system, written and oral, public and private, explicit and implicit, which they received and taught; we that she has a gift of fidelity, they of discrimination.

Again, both they and we anathematize those who deny the Faith; but they extend the condemnation to all who question any decree of the Roman Church; we apply it to those only who deny any article of the original Apostolic Creed. The creed of Romanism is ever subject to increase; ours is fixed once for all. We confine our anathema to the Athanasian Creed; Romanists extend it to Pope Pius's. They cut themselves off from the rest of Christendom; we cut ourselves off from no branch, not even from themselves. We are at peace with Rome; but she tolerates us as little as any sect or heresy. We admit her Baptism and her Orders; her custom is to re-baptize and re-ordain our members who chance to join her.

These distinctions are sufficient for my present purpose, though they are only a few out of various differences which might be pointed out. They are surely portions of a real view, which, while it re-

lieves the mind of those burdens and perplexities which are the portion of the mere Protestant, is essentially distinct from Romanism. Some further differences will be considered in my next Lecture.

LECTURE IX.

ON THE ESSENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL.

It may have been observed, that in the last several Lectures, I have frequently spoken of greater truths and lesser truths, of the essential parts of the Gospel, of the saving faith, and the like. I have said that the Church was indefectible in the faith, or in the fundamentals of revealed religion, and that in consequence she superseded Private Judgment so far, and enforced her authoritative declarations of Christian truth; in other words, that she imposed a certain faith as a condition of communion with her, inflicting anathemas on those who denied it. Yet, I have not as yet said what that Faith is, or how we ascertain it. Here then, a very important subject is opened upon us, which I shall consider in this and the following Lecture; viz. what are the essential doctrines of the Gospel; on determining which will depend the terms of communion,

the range of Private Judgment, and the character of the Church's indefectibility. What are those points, if there are such, which all branches of the Church hold, ever have held, and ever shall hold; and which every individual must profess, in order to be considered a member of the Church?

The Romanists have no difficulty in answering this question. Unscrupulousness commonly makes a clear way. Considering the Church to be infallible, and the faith to depend on the Church, not the Church to be built on the faith, they maintain, as I have already said, that whatever the Church imposes, is fundamental and essential, be it greater or less, except that what it has once imposed, it cannot of course reverse. But we Anglicans certainly have a difficulty in the matter, as aiming at truth, as dealing with facts, with the history of 1800 years, and not framing a theory at our pleasure.

For instance, Romanists ask us, *how* we determine what are the essential parts of the Gospel and what not? If we answer, that we consider all is essential *which Scripture expressly teaches*, they ask in reply how we draw the line, and who is to draw it, amid the present variety of creeds, and considering the peculiar structure of the inspired Volume.

Again, if we attempt to decide, *antecedently*, what is essential and what is not, to judge, criticise, and analyze the Revelation, we fairly expose ourselves to the charge of exalting our own reason inconsis-

tently with the very notion of faith, and with danger to its essential characteristics in ourselves.

Once more; if we appeal to *Antiquity*, which is the most advisable proceeding, then we have to determine whether *all* that Ancient Consent has taught is essential, and if so, how to ascertain it all; or, on the other hand, if we select a *portion*, we are bound to say why we select it, and pass over the rest. In consequence of these difficulties, many Protestants have taken refuge in the Latitudinarian notion that there are no essentials at all, no orthodox faith, as it is called, that all anathemas, all "damnatory clauses," as in one instance they are named, are incroachments upon Christian liberty; and that the reception of the Bible, nay, even mere sincerity, is enough, so that we live morally and religiously. Now then let us turn to the consideration of this difficulty; in the course of which I shall have the opportunity of pointing out some of the serious exceptions which lie against the Roman mode of solving it.

And, first, let it be clearly understood what is meant by the word "fundamentals" or "essentials." I do not mean by it what is "necessary to be believed for salvation by *this particular person or that*." No one but God can decide what compass of faith is required of given individuals, though the Roman Church claims to do so. The necessary Creed varies, for what we know, with each individual to whom the Gospel is addressed; one is bound

to know and believe more, or more accurately, another less. Even the minutest and most precise details of truth may have a claim upon the faith of a theologian; whereas the peasant or artisan may be accepted on a vague and rudimental faith,—which is like seeing a prospect at a distance,—such as a child has, who accepts the revealed doctrine in the letter, contemplating and embracing its meaning, not in its full force, but as far as his capacity goes. I do not then enter into the question how much is essential, and how accurately, in the case of a given individual. This is not, strictly speaking, a question of Theology; for Theology is ever concerned with doctrines, principles, abstract truths, not with their application.

Still, though the clearness or keenness of vision may vary in individuals, there may be some one object, some circle of sacred truths, which they one and all must see, whether faintly or distinctly, whether in their fulness or in outline, doctrines independent and external, which may be emphatically called the Gospel, which have been committed to the Church from the first, which she is bound to *teach* as saving, and to *enforce* as the terms of communion; doctrines, accordingly, which are necessary in themselves for what may be called an *abstract Christian*, putting aside the question of more or less, of clearness or confusion,—doctrines which he must receive in their breadth and substance, in

order to be *accounted* a Christian, and to be *admitted* into the Church.

It is plain, indeed, from what has led to this discussion, that to examine the state of this or that given individual would be quite beside our purpose, which is to determine merely this,—what doctrines the Church Catholic will *teach* indefectibly, what doctrines she must *enforce* as a condition of communion, what doctrines she must rescue from the scrutiny of Private Judgment; in a word, what doctrines are the foundation of the Church. The Romanists challenge us to produce them, thinking we cannot, and implying thereby that we cannot on our principles maintain a visible Church at all; for it stands to reason that a Church cannot exist even in theory without some revealed faith as its principle of life, whether that be a supernatural doctrine, or a claim to supernatural power.

What, then is the Church's deposit of faith, and how is it ascertained? Now I might answer, in the first place, that the event has determined it. If the Church Catholic is to be indefectible in faith, we have but to inquire what that common faith is which she now holds every where as the original deposit, and we shall have ascertained what we seek. If we adopt this course, we shall find what is commonly called the Creed, to be that in which all branches of the Church agree; and, therefore, that the fundamental or essential doctrines are those which are contained in the Creed. This conclusion,

thus inferred from the *primâ facie* state of the case, is proved to be correct from the following historical considerations.

It is known to all who are acquainted with Christian Antiquity, that at Baptism the candidate made a confession of his faith, before he was admissible to it. Here, then, we have one of our inquiries answered at once. Whatever that confession might contain, it was, by the force of the terms, the primitive condition of communion, or fundamental faith. Now this confession was what we now call the Creed. At first, indeed, that is, during the first years of the Apostles, while the Church itself was forming, the Creed was but partially developed too; nor, indeed, was there any imperative necessity, that any part of the system should be reduced to rule, while infallible guides were present. The baptismal confessions recorded in the Acts are of this nature:—"I believe that Jesus is the Son of God;"—"I believe in Jesus Christ," and the like. But this elementary confession, thus brief and incomplete as far as the express words went, seems even before the Apostles' death, to have been expanded and moulded into form, and in that form or type it has remained up to this day in the Baptismal Service. I say this was done in the Apostles' days; because history bears witness to the fact, calling it "the Creed," "the Apostles' Creed," the treasure and legacy of faith which the Apostles had left to their converts, and which was to be preserved in

the Church to the end. Indeed, St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, so speaks of it, when quoting part of it, viz., as that which had been committed to him, and which he had committed in turn to his converts[1].

Further, the early Church considered it to be unalterable; and here, again, in accordance with what appears to be St. Jude's account of it, as "the faith once for all committed unto the Saints." These two points, viz., that the essential doctrines of the Gospel, (those which must be professed as the condition of communion,) were comprised in the Creed; next that they were regarded as unalterable, can hardly be disputed; but it may be useful to adduce one or two authorities by way of illustration.

It was for this reason that the Creed was commonly called the Symbol or Badge, being a mark, such as a uniform or watchword is in the case of soldiers, distinguishing Christians from infidels.

In like manner it was called the *Regula Fidei*, or Rule of Faith, as the formulary, by which all statements of doctrine made in the Church, were to be measured and estimated.

The terms in which the early Fathers speak of it are consistent with these high titles. For instance; St. Irenæus, who is but one step removed from St. John himself, says, "The Church, though pro-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3.

pagated throughout the whole world, unto the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and their disciples the belief in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the seas and all that is therein; and in One Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Ghost, who proclaimed by the Prophets the merciful dispensation, and the advent, birth of a Virgin, passion, resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven in our flesh, of His beloved Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord, and His coming again from heaven in the glory of the Father, to gather together all things in one, and raise from the dead all flesh of human kind; that, to Christ Jesus our Lord and God, and Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the Invisible Father, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess to Him, and that He may exercise just judgment upon all, and send into everlasting fire wicked spirits, and transgressing and apostate angels, with all ungodly, unrighteous, lawless, and profane men; but upon the just and holy, who have kept His commandments and persevere in His love, whether serving Him from the first or turning by repentance, may bestow immortality by the free gift of life, and secure for them everlasting glory. This message, and this faith, which the Church has received, as I have said, though disseminated through the whole world, she diligently guards, as

though she dwelt but in one place; believes as uniformly as though she had but one soul and one heart; and preaches, teaches, hands down to posterity, as harmoniously as though she had but one mouth. True it is, the world's languages are various, but the power of the Tradition is one and the same. There is no difference of Faith or Tradition, whether in the Churches of Germany, or in Spain, or in Gaul, or in the East, or in Egypt, or in Africa, or in the more central parts of the world; but as the sun, God's creature, is one and the same in all the world, so also the preaching of the Truth shines every where, and lighteth every one who will come to the knowledge of the Truth. Among the Rulers of the Church, neither he who is all powerful in word speaks other doctrine, (for no one can be above his Master), nor does the weak in word diminish the Tradition. For, whereas the Faith is one and the same, neither he who has much to say concerning it, hath anything over, nor he who speaketh little, any lack."

Tertullian, in like manner, who was contemporary with Irenæus, gives his testimony in various places, that "the Rule of faith is altogether one, sole, unalterable, unchangeable, viz., that of believing in One God Almighty, Maker of the world, and His Son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead the third day, received into heaven, and now sitting at the right hand of the Father, and to come to

judge quick and dead, by the resurrection of the flesh."

And so, again, in the Apostolical Constitutions, which is a collection of usages of the Eastern Church, compiled about the end of the fourth century, we read that "when the Catechumen has gone through his preparatory course, and is about to be baptized, let him be told how to renounce the devil, and how to dedicate himself to Christ. . . . . Thus: 'I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps,' &c. After this renunciation, let him enrol himself among Christ's disciples, saying, 'I devote myself to Christ, and believe and am baptized into One unbegotten, the only True God Almighty, the Father of Christ, Creator and Maker of all things, of whom are all things; and in the Lord Jesus, the Christ, His only begotten Son, the first-born of every creature, &c. . . . . Who came down from heaven and took flesh on Him, and was born of the Holy Virgin Mary, &c. . . . . And was crucified under Pontius Pilate, &c. &c. . . . . And I am baptized into the Holy Spirit, which is the Comforter, which has wrought in all Saints from the beginning, and at length was sent by the Father to the Apostles, &c. . . . . and after the Apostles to all who in the Holy Catholic Church believe in the resurrection of the flesh, . . . and the life of the world to come[1].'"

[1] Iren. Hær. i. 10. Tertull. de Vel. Virg. i. Const. Apost. vii. 40, 41.

These are some out of many passages, and those separate and independent, in which we have distinctly placed before us, as the substance of the Catholic faith, what is now called the Creed; as taught in all places, and as required by every Christian on his admission into the Church. We find it digested in form, limited in its topics, circumscribed in its range, one and the same everywhere. We find, moreover, what I have as yet taken for granted, as being almost self-evident, but which the Romanist disputes, and which therefore it is necessary to prove, that the fundamentals of faith, or Creed of admission, was also the rule of teaching subsequently to admission. The Romanist would maintain that the Baptismal creed was but a portion of the sacred deposit committed to the Church's keeping. But with the passages already cited before us, which expressly call the Creed the rule of teaching, is it possible to conceive that that teaching then comprised anything that did not naturally rise out of it, or was an explanation of it? Even granting there were articles of faith which as yet lay, amid the general traditionary teaching, undefined and unrecognized in public formularies, such as the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, is it not plain that they still must have been implied and virtually contained in the Creed, if the Creed had any title to the name of a Symbol, or Rule, or Summary of Christian doctrine? Would the Fathers so have called it, had

it not been the substance and centre, the measure and analysis of the whole counsel of God, so that nothing could be added really, because there was nothing to add but what bore and depended upon it? If there had been secret doctrines, essentially distinct from these articles, yet necessary parts of the Faith, such as the expedience of Image-worship, would the Fathers have ventured to say that the Creed contained all they taught? or can any reason be assigned why Image-worship should have been kept secret, and yet the doctrine of Baptism expressed in an Article? To take a parallel case: supposing in the writings of several of our own divines, we found what professed to be an abstract of the Thirty-nine Articles, is it conceivable that one and all should omit every allusion to those Articles which treat of the controversy between us and the Romanists? is it conceivable they should say, "the English Church binds all her ministers on entering the Church to subscribe their assent to the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, Original Sin, Election, and the Sacraments; this is all she exacts of them, in every diocese?" Would any one say such an account would do justice to the prominence which the Articles give to the Roman controversy? and could any number of distinct writers coincide in giving it? I think not; and this is precisely parallel to what is supposed by Romanists of the Primitive Fathers, viz. that they were in the habit of excluding from their abstract

or table of essential and vital truths, those which, if Romanism be true, were some of the most essential, the most prominent, practical, and influential, or rather, I may say, the engrossing doctrines; that they asserted that to be the whole which after all was but a part; that a silence which would be unnatural in us who deny, is conceivable in those who enforced these doctrines as saving.

But perhaps it will be granted, that these doctrines were not part of the formal teaching of the early Church; but still maintained that they were floating opinions, commonly received, and true, though unrecognized as true, mixed with error in individuals, and undefined; but that, when the necessity arose, they were sifted, accurately determined and enforced, and so became an addition to the Rule of Faith. Nay, but we are expressly told by the Fathers that this rule does not admit of increase; it is "sole, unalterable, unreformable;" not a hint being given us of the Church's power over it. To guard and to transmit it, not to remodel it, is her sole duty, as St. Paul has determined in his 2nd Epistle to Timothy. What a contrast to passages such as the foregoing, what a violation of them is the Creed of Pope Pius, which was the result of the proceedings of Trent! whether or not its articles be true, which is a distinct question. Irenæus, Tertullian, and the rest cite the Apostles' Creed and say, "this is the faith which makes a Christian, the essentials of revelation, the

great truths of which the Gospel consists, the saving doctrine, the treasure committed to the Church;" but in the Creed of Pope Pius, after adding to it the recognition of the seven Sacraments, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, Image-worship, and Indulgences, the Romanist declares, "This true Catholic Faith, *out of which no one can be saved*, which I at present freely profess and truly hold, this same do I promise, vow, and swear by God's assistance most constantly to retain and confess, whole and inviolate, to the last breath of life." Now, I repeat, the question at present is, not whether these additions are true or false, but whether they are so clearly revealed and so powerfully and persuasively recommended to the convictions of individual Christians, as to be portions of the *necessary and saving* Catholic Faith. Are we to understand that the words "out of which no one can be saved," attaches to every one or any one of those additions? if so, whence is the Roman Church's or the Church Catholic's power to add to that essential faith which St. Jude declares, and the Fathers witness, to be once for all delivered to the Saints?

But here we are met with this objection, that Romanists have but acted in the spirit of the Nicene Council in their additions to their Creed; that the Council added the celebrated word Homoousios, or, "of one substance with the Father," when our Lord's divinity was denied by the Arians, and

that they have added twelve articles as protests against the heresies of the sixteenth century. To which I answer by asking, is there no difference between adding a word and adding a doctrine, between explaining what is in the Creed and inserting what was not in it? Surely it was not inconsistent with the reverence due to it, for the Church Catholic, after careful deliberation, to clear up any ambiguity which, as time went on, might be found to exist in its wording. The words of the Creed were not inspired; they were only valuable as expressing a certain sense, and if they were found deficient in expressing that sense, there was as little interference with things sacred, as little real change, in correcting or supplying what was needful, as in completing the lines of a chart or map by the original. That original was the one universally received faith, which was in the minds and mouths of all Christians without variation or ambiguity. When the early Christians used the word, "Son of God," they did not use a dead letter; they knew what they meant by it, and they one and all had the same meaning. In adding, then, the explanation "consubstantial with the Father," they did but fix and perpetuate that meaning, as it had been held from the beginning, when an attempt had been made to put a new sense upon it.

And this view of the subject will account for such variations in the separate articles of the Creed,

as occurred anciently in different Churches. The one faith, cast into one type, was from the first developed in this or that place with varieties in the detail, according to accidental or other circumstances. As in the first preaching of the Gospel, one convert was admitted to Baptism on confessing Jesus to be the Christ, and another on confessing Him to be the Son of God, not as if the one confession excluded the other, but because the one and the other were but different symbols, indications, or specimens of the same and only true doctrine; so in the formal symbol which the Apostles afterwards adopted and bequeathed to the Church, in one place a certain article might be added, in another omitted, without interfering with its substantial identity, or its accuracy as a summary or sketch of the faith once delivered. Thus the Roman Creed speaks of "the forgiveness of sins," the Eastern, of the "one baptism for the remission of sins," and the African, of "forgiveness of sins through the Holy Church;" yet all of them speak of but one and the same great and blessed doctrine, variously described and developed. Again, the Roman Creed speaks of Almighty God as "Maker of heaven and earth;" the Eastern adds, "and of all things visible and invisible;" while in the African the words run, if Tertullian gives them exactly, "who produced all things out of nothing by His word." These variations were as far from evidencing any real difference between these for-

mularies, as the headings of chapters in separate editions of the Bible argue difference in those chapters; and interfere as little with the integrity and oneness of the Catholic Creed, as the variations in the Lord's Prayer, as delivered to us by St. Matthew and St. Luke, prevent our considering it one and the same form.

Accordingly, we must consider the Nicene and the Apostles' Creed as identical; the latter the Creed of the West, the former of the East, from the beginning; and, as it differs as received in those two divisions of Christendom in immaterial points, so in turn in the separate countries of East and West, it varies from itself in similar details. And to this day, as the Creed called Apostles' is used in Baptism throughout the West, (as among ourselves,) so is the Nicene used on the same occasion in the Greek Church[1]. And thus we gain perhaps a truer view of what was done at Nicæa, than at first sight is apt to be taken. The assembled Fathers did not so much add to the Creed, as consolidate, harmonize, and make uniform the various formularies of the East. The phrases "God from God, Light from Light," and the like, were not the framing of the Council, but were such as had already been in use here or there, and might be adopted to advantage everywhere. Accordingly, the word "Homoousion" or consubstantial, is per-

[1] Wall on Baptism, part ii. 9. § 13.

haps the only word which can be considered as really an *addition*, and this even was no novel term, but one of long standing in Christendom, having been publicly and solemnly professed by the great Churches of the East, South, and West, and introduced at this time, as I have said, merely in *explanation* of a great article of faith, held from the first, but needing, from circumstances, a more accurate wording.

It is well, moreover, to observe the honourable jealousy, (as it may be called), which even this addition, unexceptionable and needful as it was, excited in the Western Church [1]. Even at this day, as I have already remarked, it does not occur in our Creed of Baptism. After its adoption, at Nicæa, new heresies as to our Lord's nature arose; but in spite of them, Athanasius, its illustrious champion, was firm against the attempt, which was made by some parties, to add further explanations to the Creed. He was not even moved by the rise of the Macedonians, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, to develope the article relating to that doctrine of faith. Not, of course, that he would concede one jot or tittle to their heresy, but he might consider that, under the circumstances, the maintenance of the true doctrine, could be better consulted by the unanimous voice of the Church diffusive, than by risking

[1] Taylor, Dissuasive, part ii. 1. § 4.

the disturbances which might follow upon a second explanation of the Creed in Council. This is shown by his conduct in the Council held at Alexandria upon Julian's death. A rumour had been spread that at a largely attended Council held some years after the Nicene (viz. at Sardica), some addition had been made to the Creed on the subject of the Divine Nature. On occasion of this he proposed at the Council referred to the following resolution, which is found in that Council's letter to the Church of Antioch. "As to the paper which some speak of, as having been drawn up in the Council of Sardica respecting the faith . . . that Council determined nothing of the kind. It is true that there were persons, who, on the plea that the Nicene Council was deficient, urged additions to the faith, and that in a headstrong way; but the Holy Council was indignant, and determined that no additions should be made, the Nicene Creed being sufficient . . . . lest a pretext should be afforded to those who desired to make frequent definitions of the faith." Influenced by the same feelings he desired no addition to the Creed in order to meet the heretical tenets of the Apollinarians; and all through his writings no point is urged more constantly, earnestly, and decidedly than this, that the Nicene Faith is sufficient to confute all heresies on the subject of the Divine Nature. The second General Council, indeed, after his death, supplied with great

caution, and probably from existing Creeds, some words declaratory of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit; but this being done, the Creed was finally closed and sealed once for all. Subsequent Councils might indeed profitably record their unanimous Traditions of its sense, or of doctrines collateral, but the baptismal Confession, the Creed of the Church, remained unalterable. At the third General Council (A.D. 432.) it was expressly determined that "it should not be lawful for any to publish or compose another Faith or Creed than that which was defined by the Nicene Council, and that whosoever should dare to compose or offer any such to any persons willing to be converted from Paganism, Judaism, or heresy, if they were Bishops or clergy, they should be deposed; if laymen, they should be excommunicated." The fourth General Council, nineteen years after, confirmed this decree, declaring that "the faith formerly determined should, at no hand, in no manner, be shaken or moved any more." Nor was there from that time any interference with the Creed till the era of the Council of Trent; when the Creed of Pope Pius, embodying the decrees there made, was imposed as a test of ourselves and other Protestants.

Athanasius's rule, as has been incidentally observed, was to restrain heresy rather by the existing Creed and the witness of the Church Catholic interpreting and enforcing it, than by adding to

its articles even in explanation; to adhere to the Creed and to anathematize its opposers [1]. So reluctant was he to perplex scrupulous and hesitating minds, as even to admit to communion the existing Semi-arians of his day, who repudiated the Homoousion with an unaccountable violence; influenced, that is, by the notion that the individuals really believed in accordance with the Church Catholic, and only scrupled at the word. At the same time he would not consent to their holding any office in the Church, as conceiving that an error which was but verbal in their case and the result of some peculiarity of mind, would be real and perilous in the mass of those who were submitted to their teaching, especially when the point in controversy had been once stirred.

Athanasius then considered the doctrine of the Trinity sufficiently developed in the Creed, as we now have it, for all practical purposes; at the same time his enforcement of the Homoousion shows he recognized the *principle* of such explanation. In like manner, then, had the need arisen and discretion recommended, he would have been prepared to clear up by the voice of the Church

[1] μηδὲν πλέον ἀπαιτήσητε παρ' αὐτῶν, ἢ ἀναθεματίζειν μὲν τὴν Ἀρειανὴν αἵρεσιν, ὁμολογεῖν δὲ τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ὁμογοληθεῖσαν ἐν Νικαίᾳ πίστιν. ἀναθεματίζειν δὲ καὶ τοὺς λέγοντας κτίσμα εἶναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. κ. τ. λ.— Ath. tom. ad Antioch. 3. This practice formed a curious negative comment on the Creed as time went on.

Catholic, those other articles which have come down to us in their primitive simplicity. Had, for instance, any heresy spread far and wide in his day, denying the powers of the Church, it would have been in accordance with the precedent of Nicæa, to have taken into the Catholic formulary the African article already quoted of "forgiveness of sins *through the Holy Church*," as a witness or preservative against the error. Again, Pelagius's rejection of the doctrine of Original Sin had indeed been condemned from the first by the same article as it now stands; but, had circumstances permitted, I suppose the occasion would have justified the addition of the words "both original sin and actual," to the article "forgiveness of sins." The doctrine of the Atonement is already declared in the Nicene and implied in the Roman, or Apostles' Creed; but, had a Socinus then arisen, it might have been more pointedly expressed, under sanction of a General Council, by way of fixing and perpetuating the Church's meaning. Nay, such an explanation of the original wording might be made, I conceive, even now, if the whole of Christendom agreed together in the explanation, and in its expressing the constant sense of the Church Catholic, and in its expediency. At the same time the Church necessarily has less power over the Creed now than anciently; for at first it was but a form of sound words, subservient to a faith vividly and accurately engraven on the heart

of every Christian, and so of secondary value; but now that the living power of truth has declined, it is a witness of the primitive instead of being a mere summary of existing faith. Since traditionary teaching has been impaired, it has become almost sacred from being the chief remains left us of Apostolical truth; as the likeness of a friend, however incomplete in itself, is cherished as the best memorial of him, when he has been taken from us.

If then, as we have seen, a more accurate delineation of the articles of the Creed was not to be attempted but with great caution even by the early Church Catholic, what can be said in defence of the Romanists, who created at Trent a new Creed, and published anathemas against all objectors? or in what assignable way does the introduction of the Homoousion into the Creed, in explanation of an existing article, justify the addition at Trent of essentially distinct doctrines, of articles about Image-worship, the Invocation of Saints, and the authority of Tradition, and this on the sanction of but a portion of the Church Catholic then in Council represented?

And now enough has been said by way of showing what the Faith is which was once delivered to the Saints, that Faith which is ever to remain in the world, which is the treasure and the life of the Church, the qualification of membership, and the rule of its teaching. The Creed commonly so called,

not in its mere letter, but in its living sense, is this Faith, "the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls;" to deny or resist which, is no lawful use of Private Judgment, but heresy or scepticism. We find it declared to be all this by the Church in the beginning; we find it actually maintained by all its branches even in this day of division. True it is that in the Roman communion other articles are enforced also; but the very circumstance, being irreconcilable with the doctrine of the early Fathers, is our principal ground of complaint against that Church. She has "cursed those whom God has not cursed, and defied those whom the Lord has not defied."

Before concluding, I will briefly notice a similar objection which superficial persons have urged by way of retort against ourselves. It is argued that the English Church, having drawn up articles and imposed them on the Clergy and others, has in fact committed the same fault which her advocates allege against Rome, viz. of adding without authority to the necessary faith of a Christian.

But this is surely a great misconception of the state of the case. The Thirty-nine Articles are "Articles of *religion*," not of "*faith*." We do not consider the belief in them necessary to salvation, except so far as they embody in them the articles of the Creed. They are of no divine authority, except so far as they embody these and similar portions of Apostolical Tradition; but they come

to us on ecclesiastical sanction; and they have a claim on us over and above this, first because they have been adopted by the Saints of our Church for some centuries; secondly, because we think them scriptural; thirdly, because we have subscribed them. Further, they are not necessary terms of communion in our Church, being imposed, not on all our members, but principally on the Clergy. In truth, their imposition in its first origin was much more a political than an ecclesiastical act; it was a provision of the State rather than of the Church, though the Church co-operated. I mean, that the jealousy of Rome entertained by the Civil Power, was the principle of the Reformation, considered historically; and that the *outward form* into which our religion was cast, has depended in no slight measure on the personal opinion and wishes of laymen and foreigners. Thus, our Articles were, in the first instance, a test; a test, whether the Clergy of the Church Catholic in England were willing to exercise their ministry on certain conditions, with the stipulation on the other hand that, if so, they should be protected not persecuted, and a legal recognition extended to those rights and privileges which from the beginning have been chartered to them by God Himself. But the Church Catholic knows nothing of tests, beyond the Baptismal test, if it must so be called; so that our Articles, far from being an addition on our part to the necessary faith, were in the first instance but indirectly connected with the Church at all.

I say the Church is unversed in the use of tests, not as if she may not adopt them as a matter of expedience, if she thinks fit, but because they are but the resort of authority when it is weak. We bind men with oaths when we can secure their fidelity in no other way; but the Church Catholic is inherently strong, can defend herself, and fears nothing. Ignorance of her own power is her only weakness. She admits her members on the profession of their being Christians, and if in the event they become heretical, she ejects them as she admitted. The power of the keys is the antagonist of Private Judgment. But when, from circumstances, she suspends her use of that power, being deprived of her natural defence, she needs others; she makes "alliances," so called, or appeals to her civil rights; and in like manner declarations and pledges on the part of her members may become a suitable, as well as necessary expedient, for securing herself against the encroachments of heresy.

Accordingly the English Church co-operates with the State in exacting subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, as a test, and that not only of the Clergy, but also of the governing body in our Universities, a test against Romanism; but, while so doing, she has, after her manner, modified and elevated their original scope in a way well worthy of our gratitude.

The faulty principle, involved in the decrees of Trent, is, not the mere publication of doctrines, which lay hid in the Creed, but the enforcement of

them as necessary points of faith. To collect, systematize, and set forth the Traditions of the Church, is surely a most edifying and important work, and great is our debt to Councils, modern or ancient, in proportion as they have attempted this; even though the direct Apostolical origin of every phrase or view of doctrine they adopt, be not certain. Now the Articles of our Church must be considered as doing this for us in their place and degree. It is no valid objection to them, whether the fact be so or not, that they are but partially drawn from Traditionary sources, or that the individual authors of them are unknown, or the state of feeling and opinion in the writers at the moment of their writing them, or that they were inclined to what is now called either Calvinism, or Arminianism, or some of them to the one, some to the other. Such objections, however popular, are very superficial. The Church is not built upon individuals, nor knows individuals. We do not receive the Articles from individuals, however justly celebrated, but as recommended to us by our Church itself; and whether we judge of the Church's meaning in imposing them by the consent of her Divines since their imposition, or by the intention of that Convocation [1], which immediately ratified them, we shall come to this conclusion, that whatever have been the designs or feelings of individuals, *she* in-

[1] Waterland on Ecclesiastical Antiquity, 8.

tends us to receive them as portions of Catholic teaching, as expressing and representing that Ancient Religion, which of old time found voice and attained consistency in Athanasius, Basil, Augustine, Chrysostom, and other primitive Doctors. This is plain, I say, to a demonstration, from the words of the Convocation of 1571; which, when imposing the Thirty-nine Articles, also injoined by Canon, that preachers "should be careful, that they never teach aught in a sermon, to be religiously held and believed by the people, except that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, and *which the Catholic Fathers and Ancient Bishops have collected* from that very doctrine." It is evident that the Divines who drew up this Canon, did not dream, (to use a common phrase), of the Thirty-nine Articles in any degree superseding or interfering with the Ancient Catholic teaching, or of their burdening us with the novelties of any modern school. Nor is there any thing in their "literal and grammatical sense," of which the King's Declaration speaks, inconsistent with this Ancient Teaching, whatever obscurities may hang over their origin historically, a subject, which that Declaration renders unimportant.

The Thirty-nine Articles, then, are adopted by our Church in a sense equally remote from the presumptuous dogmatism of Rome, and from the cold and narrow feeling which a test implies. They are neither enforced as necessary for communion

nor lowered to the mere negative purpose of excluding error; but they are instruments of teaching, of Catholic teaching, being, as far as they go, heads, as it were, of important chapters in revealed truth. And it is under this view of them that we put them before the young, not by way of ascertaining their Churchmanship, but as the particular forms under which we teach the details of faith, the basis on, and out of which, the superstructure of theology may be most conveniently raised.

Such, then, seems to be the light in which we are to regard our Articles; and till they are imposed on all our members as terms of communion, they are quite consistent with the doctrine held, as we have seen, by Antiquity concerning the Apostolic Creed, quite distinct from the tyrannical enforcement of the Tridentine Articles on the part of Rome.

LECTURE X.

ON THE ESSENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL.

I TRUST that the foregoing Lectures have disposed us to take a more cheerful view of what the Protestantism of the day considers a hardship. It considers it a hardship to have anything clearly and distinctly told it in elucidation of Scripture doctrine, an infringement on its right of doubting, and mistaking, and labouring in vain. And the violent effort to keep itself in this state of ignorance,—this unnatural "stopping of its ears," and "throwing dust into the air," after the pattern of those Jews who would not hear the voice of Apostles and Martyrs,—all this it dignifies by the title of defending the sacred right of Private Judgment, calls it a holy cause, a righteous battle, and other large and senseless epithets. But I trust that we have learned to glory in that which the world calls a bondage. We do boast and exult in bearing Christ's yoke, whether of faith or of obedience;

and we consider His Creed, not as a tyrannical infliction, (God forbid!) or a jealous test, but as a glorious privilege, which we are ready to battle and to suffer for, yea, much more ready, (so be it! through His grace), than they for their low, carnal, and despicable licence to reject it.

And as they are eager to secure their liberty in religious opinions as the right of every individual, so do we make it every individual's prerogative to maintain and defend the Creed. They cannot allow more to the individual in the way of variety of opinion, than we do in that of confessorship. The humblest and meanest among Christians may defend the faith against the whole Church, if the need arise. He has as much stake in it and as much right to it, as Bishop or Archbishop, and has nothing to limit him but his intellectual capacity of doing so. The greater his attainments the more serviceably of course and the more suitably will he enter into the dispute; but all that learning has to do for him is to ascertain the fact, what is the meaning of the Creed in particular points, since matter of opinion it is not, any more than the history of the rise and spread of Christianity itself. No persons properly qualified, whatever their own opinion may be, can doubt, for instance, in what case the articles of the Creed concerning the Son of God, are contradicted; all that can come into dispute is, whether those articles are necessary or essential to the Gospel.

Now then, having considered in general what the

saving faith is, let us proceed to examine some of the principal objections which are taken to us.

1. First then, it may be urged, that the Creed, which I have stated to be the abstract of saving faith, does not include all doctrines which are essential; especially it does not include any acknowledgment that Scripture is the word of God. It has been asked of us, is belief in Scripture a fundamental of faith or not? if it is, it follows that there are fundamental doctrines besides the articles of the Creed; if it is not, what becomes of the popular notion that the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants? I answer as follows:—

If the Romanist asks, whether belief in Scripture is an essential part of the faith, which he is apt to do, I ask him in turn, whether the Infallibility of the Church is or is not in his system an article of faith. It is nowhere so declared; how then is it less defective in Romanism to omit so cardinal a doctrine, than in our own system to omit the inspiration and canonicity of the Scriptures? Whatever answer he gives in his own behalf, will serve for us also. If he says, for instance, that the whole of Romanism implies and is built upon the principle of Infallibility, that the doctrines which it holds as fundamental could not be such, were not the Church an infallible oracle, that every truth must have some truth beyond it until we come to the ultimate principles of knowledge, that a Creed

never could recount all the previous steps by which it became a Creed, and that after all the doctrine in question is at least indirectly expressed in Pope Pius's Creed, I answer that much the same pleas may be offered in defence of Scripture not being recognized in the Apostolic Creed. It may be something more than a fundamental of faith; it may be the foundation of the fundamentals, and may be passed over in the Creed, as being presupposed and implied in it. This might be said in explanation. But in truth it is really recognized in it as the standard of appeal; viz. in those articles which, after St. Paul's pattern, speak of our Lord's resurrection as being "according to the Scriptures." What happens to be expressed in one instance is a kind of index of what is tacitly signified throughout. This, indeed, is no proof to a Romanist, who denies that the Bible *was* considered by the original framers of the Creed, as the fundamental record of the Gospel: but it goes as far as this, to show the Bible *may have been* so considered by them, to show that our doctrine is consistent with itself. As far as the facts of the case go, that *may* be, which we say really *is*. The indirect manner in which Scripture is alluded to in the Creed, while agreeable to the notion that the Creed contains all the fundamentals, seems also to imply that Scripture is their foundation.

This is no singular case. I refer to the parallel of Romanism, not as a mere *argumentum ad homi-*

nem, but as a specimen of a general principle. Surely it might be asked, with just as much, and just as little reason, whether belief in a Revelation be a fundamental of faith; whereas the fact of its being granted is properly a truth prior to the fundamentals, for without a revelation there would be nothing to believe in at all. Now what is the Bible, if it is worth while to pursue the argument, but the permanent voice of God, the embodied and continuous sound, or at least the specimen and symbol of the message once supernaturally delivered? By *necessary* faith, is not meant all that must be believed, but all that must be *immediately* believed, what must be professed *on* coming for admittance into the Church, what must be proclaimed as the condition of salvation; it is quite another question whether there be certain necessary antecedents, and of what nature. It is impossible, for instance, to accept the Creed, or to come for Baptism, without belief in a Moral Governor, yet there is not a word on the subject in the Creed, nor is it to be looked for there. Again, the candidate for Baptism must feel the needs and misery of his nature, the guilt of disobedience, his own actual demerits and danger, and the power, purity, and justice of God, if Baptism is to be profitable to him; yet these convictions are preparatives, not parts of Baptismal faith; not parts of that act of the mind by which the candidate realizes things invisible, surveys the Gospel

Economy, embraces it, submits to it, appropriates it, and is led to confess it. Faith is of many kinds, and these have their respective objects. Repentance involves faith; yet is always considered distinct from justifying faith notwithstanding. No one can come to God without believing "that He is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," but, we know, Calvinists and others consider that the faith that justifies is the mere looking to Christ's Atonement; so that they at least will understand the distinction here insisted on. I say, belief in the Scriptures may be requisite for a Christian, but still as little be included in the Baptismal faith, as the faith which "cometh to God," or the faith implied in repentance.

But I will go further, and venture to deny that belief in the Scriptures, is, abstractedly, necessary to Church communion and salvation. It does not follow from this that any one, to whom they are actually offered, may without mortal sin reject them; but in the same way a man is bound to believe *all* truth which is brought home to him, not the Creed only. Still it may be true that faith in Scripture is not one of the conditions which the Church necessarily exacts of candidates for Baptism; and that it is not, is, I suppose, sufficiently clear. Heathen nations have commonly been converted, not by the Bible, but by Missionaries. If we insist that formal belief in the Canon of Scripture, as the inspired Word of God, has been

a necessary condition of salvation, we exclude from salvation, as far as our words go, (which happily is, not at all,) multitudes even in the earliest ages of the Gospel, to say nothing of later times. A well-known passage of St. Irenæus is in point, in which he says; "Had the Apostles left us no Scriptures, doubtless it had been a duty to follow the course of Tradition, which they gave to those whom they put in trust with the Churches. This procedure is observed in many barbarous nations, such as believe in Christ, without written memorial, having salvation impressed through the Spirit in their hearts, and diligently preserving the Old Tradition[1]."

The Creed, indeed, can be *proved* from Scripture, which in this sense is its foundation, but it does not therefore follow that it must be so proved by every one who receives it. Scripture is the foundation of the Creed; but belief in Scripture is not the foundation of belief in the Creed. It is not so in matter of fact, even at this day, in spite of the extended circulation of the Scriptures. It is not true in fact, and never will be, that the mass of serious Christians derive their faith for themselves from the Scriptures. No; they derive it from Tradition, whether true or corrupt; and they are intended by Divine Providence to derive it from the true, viz., that which the Church Catholic has ever furnished; but *how*

[1] Hær. iii. 4.

they derive it, whether from Scripture or Tradition, is in no case a necessary point of faith to be asked and answered before their admittance into the Church. Suffice that they believe in the blessed doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and the other parts of the Gospel, however they have learned them; as to Scripture, they either do already believe it to be God's word, if they have been properly catechized, or they shortly will, but its divinity, though a necessary and all-important, is only a collateral truth.

But, if this be so, how very extravagant is the opposite notion, now so common, that belief in the Bible is the *sole* or *main* condition for a man being considered a Christian! how very unchristian the title by which many men delight to designate themselves, turning good words into bad, as Bible-Christians! We are all of us Bible-Christians in one sense; but the term as actually used is unchristian, for the following reason.—Directly it is assumed that the main condition of communion is the acceptance of the Bible as the word of God, doctrines of whatever sort become of but secondary importance. They will practically become matters of mere opinion, the deductions of Private Judgment from that which alone is divine. This principle then, of popular Protestantism, is simply Latitudinarian; and tends by no very intricate process to the recognition of Socinians and Pelagians as Christians. Men who hold it and yet

attempt to hold definite essentials of faith, are in a false position, which they cannot ultimately retain; as the history of the last three centuries abundantly shows. They must either give up their maxim about the Bible and the Bible only, or they must give up the Nicene formulary. The Bible does not carry with it its own interpretation. When pressed to say why they maintain fundamentals of faith, they will have no good reason to give, supposing they do not receive the Creed also as a first principle. Why, it is asked them, should those who equally with themselves believe in the Bible, be denied the name of Christians, because they do not happen to discern the doctrine of the Trinity therein? If they answer that Scripture itself singles out certain doctrines as necessary to salvation, and that the Trinity is one of them, this, indeed, is most true, but avails not to persons committed to so untrue a theory. It is urged against them, that, though the texts referred to *may* imply the Catholic doctrine, yet they *need* not; that they are consistent with any one out of several theories; or, at any rate, that other persons think so; that these others have as much right to their opinion as the party called orthodox to theirs; that human interpreters have no warrant to force upon them one view in particular; that Private Judgment must be left unmolested; that man must not close, what God has left open; that Unitarians (as they are called) believe in a Trinity, only not in the

Catholic sense of it; and that, where men are willing to take and profess what is written, it is not for us to be "wise above what is written;" especially when by such a course we break the bonds of peace and charity. This reasoning, granting the first step, is resistless; I do not mean that it convinces those against whom it is directed, for their hearts happily are far better than their professed principles, and keep them from acting upon them. They, more or less, believe in the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, not as mere deductions, but as primary truths, objects of their faith, embraced and enjoyed by their spiritual sight, though they use language which implies that they have gained them by a process of reasoning[1]. But though certain individuals are not injured by the principle in question; the body of men who profess it are, and ever must be injured. For the mass of men, having no moral convictions, *are* led by reasoning and by mere consistency of argument; and legitimately evolve heresy from principles which to the

[1] Nothing that is here said is inconsistent with the doctrine that Scripture does admit of inferences from its text, and that the orthodox inferences are the true ones. Indeed this is what is meant by a *text;* a wording which may be rested in and variously applied. It is only maintained that inferences will be more useful in teaching our own people, than in convincing our opponents as to the points in question. Vid. a valuable collection of Tracts "on Scripture Consequences," lately edited by the Rev. Vaughan Thomas.

better sort of men may be harmless.—And now let us proceed to a second objection which may be advanced against the doctrine of fundamentals, as I have maintained it.

2. It may be urged, then, that at least the Creed does not contain the rudiments of the whole revealed truth, even though it contain all its main elements; so that the charge which was brought in the last Lecture against the Romanists, of considering it only an initiatory formulary, and not an abstract of the whole Gospel, lies against us also; else what is the meaning of our Articles, which undeniably contain doctrines, not developed out of the Creed, but added to it? These doctrines, it may be urged, either are Apostolical, or they are not; if they are, they must be binding; if they are not, they ought not to be taught. If true, they must be necessary; we cannot choose but believe them; they have claims upon our acceptance in the nature of things, and the idea of receiving them or not, as we please, is self-contradictory. Now I would maintain, on the contrary, that there are what may be called minor points, which we may hold to be true without imposing them as necessary; and, as I have already considered those which are of first importance, let me now direct attention to those which are secondary.

Doctrines may be secondary from two reasons; in their nature and in their evidence. Evidence which may be strong enough to make it safer to

believe and act than to remain uninfluenced, may yet be insufficient to enable us to preach and impose what it attests. I may believe, for instance, that infant baptism is an Apostolic usage, and think men very mistaken and unhappy who think otherwise, and yet not feel authorised to say, that to disbelieve it is to throw oneself out of the pale of salvation. The highest evidence of Apostolical Tradition is where the testimony is not only everywhere and always, but where it has ever been recognized *as* tradition, and reflected upon and professedly delivered down as saving, by those who hold it. Such is the Creed, and such, in the way of ordinances, are the Sacraments, and certain other rites and usages. The next are those doctrines which are delivered as tradition, but not as part of the faith. Next may be placed consent of Fathers, without apparent consciousness of agreement, as in the interpretation of Scripture. Other doctrines again, may come on such comparatively slender evidence, as to be but probable, as interpretations of prophecy. For all these reasons it may be right in many cases to teach without enforcing; and again, it may be safe or pious to believe, where it cannot be pronounced absolutely necessary, or be made a condition of communion.

Again, the matter of the doctrine may be of a nature not to demand enforcement; mere facts are an instance in point. It is certain that David was king of Israel; and that St. Paul was martyred;

yet it would be unmeaning to say belief in such facts was necessary to salvation. Again, certain doctrines may be true only under circumstances, or accidentally, or but expedient, or developments of the truth relatively to a given state of things; such as the duty of the union of Church and State. Or they may be comparatively unimportant, as the duty of women covering their heads in Church; or they may be but protests against the errors of a particular day.

Such are most of those doctrines in our Articles which go beyond the doctrine of the Creed; such are many of the decrees of Roman and other Councils. All of these, whether true or false, are at any rate no part of necessary truth; as for instance the doctrine of the soul's consciousness in the intermediate state, of the indirectly divine character of Paganism, of the person and reign of Antichrist, of the just limits of the Pope's power, of the time of keeping Easter, of the duty of bearing arms, of the lawfulness of oaths, of the use of the Cross, of the design of the Jewish Law, of the indefectibility of the Church, and an indefinite multitude of others. But it may be better to treat the subject historically, though at the risk of some repetition.

I say, then, that the Creed is a collection of definite articles set apart from the first, passing from hand to hand, rehearsed and confessed at Baptism, committed and received from Bishop to

Bishop, forced upon the attention of each Christian, and demanding and securing due explanation of its meaning. It is received on what may fitly be called, if it must have a distinctive name, Episcopal Tradition. Besides, it is delineated and recognized in Scripture itself, where it is called the Hypotyposis, or "outline of sound words;" and again, in the writings of the Fathers, as in some of the passages cited in the last Lecture. But independently of this written evidence in its favour, we may observe that a Tradition, thus formally and statedly enunciated and delivered from hand to hand, is of the nature of a written document, and has an evidence of its Apostolical origin the same in kind with that for the Scriptures. For the same reason, though it is not to the purpose here to insist on it, rites and ceremonies too are something more than mere oral Traditions, and, as being so, carry with them a considerable presumption in behalf of the things signified by them. And all this, let it be observed, is independent of the question of the Catholicity of the rites or doctrines which are thus formally sealed and handed down; a property which also attaches to both of them, and becomes an additional argument for their Apostolical origin.

Such then is Episcopal Tradition; to be received according to the capacity of each individual mind. But besides this, there is what may be called Prophetical Tradition. Almighty God placed in His

Church first Apostles, or Bishops, secondarily Prophets. Apostles rule and preach, Prophets expound. Prophets or Doctors, are the interpreters of the revelation; they unfold and define its mysteries, they illuminate its documents, they harmonize its contents, they apply its promises. Their teaching is a vast system, not to be comprised in a few sentences, not to be embodied in one code or treatise, but consisting of a certain body of Truth, permeating the Church like an atmosphere, irregular in its shape from its very profusion and exuberance; at times separable only in idea from Episcopal Tradition, yet at times melting away into legend and fable[1]; partly written, partly unwritten, partly the interpretation, partly the supplement of Scripture, partly preserved in intellectual expressions, partly latent in the spirit and temper of Christians; poured to and fro in closets and upon the housetops, in liturgies, in controversial works, in obscure fragments, in sermons. This I call Prophetical Tradition, existing primarily in the bosom of the Church itself, and recorded in such measure as Providence has determined in the writings of eminent men. This

[1] *E. g.* The Catholic interpretation of certain portions of Scripture, as Rom. vii. comes close upon the highest kind of Tradition; on the other hand, the Tradition of facts is very uncertain, often apocryphal, as that St. Ignatius was the child whom our Lord took in His arms and blessed, which, however, even if untrue, indirectly confirms certain truths, viz. that St. Ignatius was closely connected with the Apostles, &c.

is obviously of a very different kind from the Episcopal Tradition, yet in its origin it is equally Apostolical, and equally claims our zealous maintenance. "Keep that which is committed to thy charge," is St. Paul's injunction to Timothy, and for this reason, because from its vastness and indefiniteness it is especially exposed to corruption, if the Church fails in vigilance. This is that body of teaching which is offered to all Christians even at the present day, though in various forms and measures of truth, in different parts of Christendom, partly being a comment, partly an addition upon the articles of the Creed.

Now what has been said has sufficed to show, that it may easily happen that Prophetical Tradition may have been corrupted in details, in spite of its general accuracy and its agreement with Episcopal; and if so, there will be lesser points of doctrine as well as greater points, whatever be their number and limit, from which a person may possibly dissent, as doubting their Apostolical origin, without incurring any anathema or public censure. And this is supposed on the Anglican theory actually to be the case; that though the Prophetical Tradition comes from God, and ought to have been religiously preserved, and was so in great measure and for a long time, yet that no such especial means were taken for its preservation as those which have secured to us the Creed; that it was more what St. Paul calls "the mind of the Spirit," the thought and principle which breathed in the

Church, her accustomed and unconscious mode of viewing things, and the body of her received notions, than any definite and systematic collection of dogmas elaborated by the intellect. Partially, indeed, it was fixed and perpetuated in the shape of formal articles or doctrines, as the rise of errors or other causes gave occasion; and it is preserved to a considerable extent in the writings of the Fathers. For a time the whole Church agreed in one and the same account of it; but in the course of centuries, love waxing cold and schisms abounding, her various branches developed them out of the existing mass for themselves, and, according to the accidental influences which prevailed at the time, was the work done well or ill, rudely or accurately. It follows, that these developed and fixed truths are entitled to very different degrees of credit, though always to attention. Those which are recognized by the Church at an early date, are of more authority than such as are determined at a later; those which are made by the joint assent of many independent Churches, than those which are the result of some preponderating influence; those that are sanctioned dispassionately, than those which are done in fear, anger, or jealousy. Accordingly, some Councils speak far more authoritatively than others, though all which appeal to Tradition, may be presumed to have some element of truth in them. And this view, I would take even of the decrees of Trent. They pretend indeed

to be Apostolic; but the very lightest judgment which can be passed on them is, that they are the *ruins* and *perversions* of Primitive Tradition.

What has been here maintained, that there are matters of doctrine, true yet not necessary, is the judgment of the Fathers; as the following authorities suffice to show.

The first instance I shall take is an extraordinary one; yet that does not make it less cogent. It is Athanasius's conduct towards the Semi-arians. Even the article of the Homoousion, which from its wide acceptance in former centuries, justified the Nicene Fathers in admitting it into the Catholic Creed, was not imposed by them on those who had been admitted into the Church before their decree was made. It was exacted, indeed, at once of the Clergy, as being teachers, but not of the laity. On the other hand, anathemas were levelled against those who openly professed any other doctrine. Here then we have three classes of persons brought before us; the ministers of the Church bound to teach after her rule, contumacious opposers excommunicated, and the mass of Christians left as they were before, neither pledged as if teachers, nor expelled as if heretics. "What has been said," says Athanasius in one place, "is sufficient for the refutation of those who altogether *reject* the Council. But as for those who receive its whole Creed except the word Homoousion, but doubt about it, we must not regard them as enemies; for our op-

position to them is not as if we thought them Arians and impugners of the Fathers, but we converse with them as brothers with brothers, who hold the same sense as we do, only hesitate about the word."

To the same purpose are the following passages from Vincentius of Lerins. "It is necessary," he says, "that the heavenly sense of Scripture be explained according to this one rule, the Church's understanding of it, principally in those questions only on which the *foundations* of the whole Catholic doctrine rest." Again, he says, "The ancient consent of the Holy Fathers is to be diligently ascertained and followed, *not in all the lesser questions* of the Divine Law, but only or at least principally as regards the Rule of Faith." And again, in the following passage, he tacitly allows the right of Private Judgment in lesser matters, that is, the necessity and duty of judging on our own responsibility piously and cautiously, so that our conclusions be not pertinaciously urged, for then our Judgment is no longer Private in any unexceptionable sense of the word. "Whatever opinion has been held beyond or against the whole Church, however holy and learned be the author of it, let it be separated from common, public and general opinions which have authority, and included among peculiar, secret, and private surmises[1]."

[1] Athan. de Syn. 41. Vincent. Commonit. 39. 41.

3. That there are greater truths, then, and lesser truths, points which it is necessary, and points which it is pious to believe, Tradition Episcopal and Tradition Prophetical, the Creed and the Decrees of Councils, seems undeniable. But here another objection obviously calls for consideration; viz., how the line is to be drawn between them. It has been above confessed that the doctrine of the Creed runs into the general Prophetical Tradition; how much, then, or how little doctrine is contained in the Creed? what extent and exactness of meaning must be admitted in its Articles by those who profess it? what in fact, after all, is that Faith which is required of the candidates for Baptism, since it is not to be an acceptance of the mere letter of the Creed, but of a real and living doctrine? For instance, is the doctrine of original sin to be accounted part of the Creed? or of justification by faith? or of election? or of the Sacraments? If so, is there any limit to that faith which the Creed represents?

I answer, there is no precise limit; nor is it necessary there should be. Let this maxim be laid down concerning all that the Church Catholic holds, to the full extent of her Prophetical Tradition, that her members must either believe or silently acquiesce in *the whole* of it. Though the meaning of the Creed be extended ever so far, it cannot go beyond our duty of obedience, if not of active faith; and if the line between the Creed and the

general doctrine of the Church cannot be drawn, neither can it be drawn between the lively apprehension and the submission of her members in respect to both the one and the other. Whether it be apprehension or submission, it is faith in one or other shape, nor can individuals themselves distinguish between what they spiritually perceive, and what they accept upon authority. It is the duty of every one either to believe and love what he hears, or to wish to do so, or at least, not to oppose, but to be silent.

This distinction between openly opposing and passively submitting to the Tradition of the Church Catholic, is recognized by Vincentius in the last of the foregoing extracts; and rests upon grounds which have come under notice in former Lectures, and which easily recommend themselves to the mind.

Take the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch, whom Philip baptized. Philip did not oblige him to contemplate, accept, and profess, the doctrine of eternal punishment, yet surely the Eunuch was not at liberty to oppose it. He did not, could not teach him at once every thing that was to be learned; yet was he at liberty, when once a Christian, to sift, criticise, and prove for himself Philip's teaching before he accepted it? Whether or not this case is precisely parallel to that under consideration, it shows all that I bring it to show, that there is a medium conceivable between confessing all truth from the first, and having a right

of opposing it from the first? Such opposition, or again, even a resolute disbelief without open opposition, would be the token of an arrogant mind, as certainly as wilful acts of impurity argue a carnal mind; and as a fornicator or adulterer would be an unfit subject for Church communion, so would a disturber of the Church's Tradition. He is excluded on a moral offence; not only because he believes amiss, but because he acts presumptuously. The Church Catholic is more likely to be right than he.

Such is the moral state, and such the punishment of those who presumptuously resist the Church; but it does not follow because a man does not oppose a certain article that therefore he firmly holds it. There is surely a middle state of mind between affirming and denying; and that in many forms, and in one or other of them, it is the portion, in a measure, of all of us. Either we are ignorant, or we are undecided, or we are in doubt, or we are in inquiry, or we take secret exceptions in one or other part of that extended system which has existed more or less all over the Church, and which I have called the Prophetical Tradition. The state of the case then seems to be as follows:—

The Primitive Church recollected she was instituted for the sake of the poor and ignorant. "To the poor the Gospel is preached." She was simple and precise in her fundamentals to include

all classes, to suggest heads of belief, to assist the memory, to save the mind from perplexity. However, while thus considerate, she has not forgotten her high office, as the appointed teacher of her children. She is "the pillar and ground of the truth;" of all truth, Christian Truth in all its developments, in the interpretation of Scripture, in the exposition of doctrine, in the due appointment of ordinances, in the particular application and adjustment of the moral law. She is called a superstructure, as being built upon the great rudiments of the Gospel Doctrine; a pillar and ground as being the expounder of it. And, in consequence, such being her office towards her children, they are bound, if they would remain her children, as far as their minds embrace her doctrine, to take it on the ground of her Catholicity.

I say, "as far as their minds embrace it," for few of us indeed have the opportunity of acquainting ourselves with the whole system of truth which is preserved in the Church. Every word of revelation has a deep meaning. It is the outward form of a heavenly truth, and in this sense a mystery or Sacrament. We may read it, confess it; but there is something in it which we cannot fathom, which we only, more or less, as the case may be, not perfectly, enter into. Accordingly when a candidate for Baptism repeats the Articles of the Creed, he is confessing something incomprehensible in its depth, and indefinite in its extent. He cannot know at

the time *what* he is binding on himself, whither he is letting himself be carried. It is the temper of reverent faith to feel this; to feel that in coming to the Church, it stands before God's representative, and that, as in her Ordinances, so in her Creed, there is a something supernatural and beyond us. Another property of faith is the wish to conceive rightly of sacred doctrine, as far as it can conceive at all; and, further, to look towards the Church for guidance how to conceive of it. This is faith, viz., submission of the reason and will towards God, wistful and loving meditation upon His message, childlike reliance on the guide which is ordained by Him to be the interpreter of it. The Church Catholic is our mother; if we attend to this figure, we shall have little practical difficulty in the matter before us. A child comes to his mother for instruction; she gives it. She does not assume infallibility, nor is she infallible; yet it would argue a very unpleasant temper in the child to doubt her word, to require proof of it before acting on it, to go needlessly to other sources of information. Sometimes, perhaps, she mistakes in lesser matters, and is set right by her child; yet this neither diminishes her prerogative of teaching, nor his privilege of receiving dutifully. Now this is what the Church does towards her children, according to the primitive design. She puts before them, first of all, as the elements of her teaching, nothing but the original Creed; her teaching will

follow in due time, but as a privilege to children necessarily ignorant, not as a condition of communion,—as a privilege which will be welcomed by them, and accepted joyfully, or they would be wanting in that temper of faith which the very coming for Baptism presupposes.

Thus, then, we meet the difficulty of drawing the line between essentials and non-essentials. The Church asks for a dutiful and simple-hearted acceptance of her message growing into faith, and that variously, according to the circumstances of individuals. And, if this be the principle on which the Catholic Church anciently acted, we see how well it was adapted to try the humility of her children, without imposing any yoke upon them, after the manner of Rome, or of repressing the elastic or creative force of their minds. She makes her way by love, she does not force a way by violence. All she asks is their *confidence*, which will practically preserve them from all difference from her, except in minor matters. Thus, she allows for a variation in the evidence itself of her full doctrines, and in the impression conveyed by this or that part of her Creed, in the case of particular minds. She is gentle, holds back, watches her time, and is persuasive according to the opportunity. She secures to herself the power of accommodating her communications to the circumstances, ranks, and ages of her children; of consulting for their ignorance, or even waywardness; of keeping silence when it

would be inexpedient or unkind to urge truth in its fulness, or, where men are unworthy of it; of letting the reason range, and then bringing it round. She exacts the great rudiments of the Gospel from all, she requires teachableness, she is severe with scepticism, but she is tender and affectionate amid her zeal and loyalty towards God. She does not "strive nor cry," nor "quench the smoking flax;" but retires into the sanctuary, dispensing her message, not lavishly, or by necessity, but on those who care to follow her. She has that confidence in the truth of her doctrine, and in the sovereignty of truth, that she can be long-suffering towards error; that faith in her spiritual powers, that she is slow to display them. She can bear with the froward or the obstinate within bounds, knowing her gift both in the word and in the sacraments, when the time comes for displaying it. She has too generous a temper to rule by engagements, but like an absolute monarch, is familiar with her children without jealousy, because God is with her. But supposing they are hopelessly contumacious, resist her word, oppose and preach against her, she has no desire, nay, no warrant to retain them, and suffers or compels them to depart, lest the rest should be injured. Yet after all, even when she strips them of her glorious privileges, she does not thereby absolutely pronounce on the spiritual state in God's sight, or future destiny of the given individuals so visited. She is as little concerned with such ques-

tions as if they were heathens. She surrenders them to that Master, "to whom they stand or fall;" doing her part, and leaving the rest to Him.

4. It is time to bring this Lecture to an end, but one objection, and not the least important, remains, which shall be treated with as much brevity as the nature of it admits. It will be said that even if the above theory of Fundamentals is consistent, yet, after all, it is but a theory; a mere shadowy, baseless, ingenious theory, since the division of the East and West, and still more so since the great schism of the North and South. "You speak," it may be urged against me, "of the Church Catholic, of the Church's teaching, and of obedience to the Church. What is meant by the Church Catholic at this day? where is she? what are her local instruments and organs? how does she speak? when and where does she teach, forbid, command, censure? how can she be said to utter one and the same doctrine every where, when we are at war with all the rest of Christendom, and not at peace at home? In the Primitive Church there was no difficulty, and no mistaking; then all Christians every where spoke one and the same doctrine, and if any novelty arose, it was at once denounced and stifled. The case is the same, indeed, with the Roman Church now; but for Anglicans so to speak, is to use words without meaning, to dream of a state of things long past away

from this Protestant land. The Church is now but a mere abstract word; it stands for a generalized idea, not the name of any one thing really existing; which if it ever was, yet ceased to be, when Christians divided from each other, centuries upon centuries ago. Rome and Greece, at enmity with each other, both refuse communion to England, and anathematize her faith. Again, in the English Church by itself may be found differences as great as those which separate it from Greece or Rome; Calvinism and Arminianism, Latitudinarianism and Orthodoxy, all these sometimes simply such, and sometimes compounded together into numberless varieties of doctrine and school; and these not merely each upholding itself as true, but, with few exceptions, denouncing all the rest as perilous, if not fatal errors. Such is its state even among its appointed ministers and teachers. Where, then, in the English Church is that one eternal voice of Truth; that one witness issuing from the Apostles' times, and conversant with all doctrine, the expounder of the Creed, the interpreter of Scripture, and the instructer of the people of God?"

Whatever truth there is in these remarks, still I cannot allow that what I have been above drawing out is therefore a mere tale of other times, when addressed to those who are really bent on serving God as well as they can, and who consult what is most likely to please Him. The very difficulty of applying it, will be a test whether we earnestly desire

to do His will or not. Those who do not, will gladly seize the excuse that it was difficult to find it. Common experience of life shows us clearly enough how men evade what they do not like. They find reasons for pleasing themselves, real unanswerable reasons, such as cannot be met or exposed, but which after all do not deceive us for an instant as to the real motives which influence them. The two things are quite distinct and quite compatible, neither interfering with the other or arguing its absence, the motive for an act and the excuse for it. The excuse which is urged to defend it, does not obscure in any degree the motive which it argues. We know quite well that if their heart had been in the business, they would have found at least an approximation and made an attempt towards that which they have passed over; as is even plain from the proverb, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Now, we have no reason to suppose, that God will accept in our conduct towards Him excuses which we see through when directed against ourselves; and, if so, the difficulty of obedience may be a trial of our motives, not a subject for argument. The servant who hid his talent and made excuses, did not find his account in making them.

It being kept in view, then, what kind of obedience God requires of us, viz. such as we can pay, not the alternative of the highest conceivable, or none at all, of the very letter, or else not the spirit,

let us see, whether even amid our present confusions there be any such insuperable obstacle in obeying the Church, as is pretended. Now, in spite of differences within and without, our own branch may be considered among us as the voice of her who has been in the world ever one and the same since Christ came. Surely, she comes up to the theory; she transmits the ancient Catholic Faith simply and intelligibly. Not the most unlettered of her members can miss her meaning. She speaks in her formularies and services. The Daily Prayer, the Occasional Offices, the Order of the Sacraments, the Ordination Services, presents one and the same strong, plain, edifying language to rich and poor, learned and unlearned, and that not as the invention of this Reformer or that, but as the witness of all Saints from the beginning. The very titles of the Prayers and Creeds show this; such as, "the Apostles'" and "the Nicene Creeds," "the Creed of St. Athanasius," "the Catholic Faith," "the Catholic Religion," a "Prayer of St. Chrysostom," and the like. It is undeniable, that a stranger taking up the Prayer-Book would feel it was no modern production; the very Latin titles to the Psalms and Hymns would prove it. It claims to be Catholic; nor is there any one of any party to deny, that on the whole it is. To follow the Church, then, in this day, is to follow the Prayer-Book, instead of following preachers, who are but individuals. Its words are not the acci-

dental out-pouring of this or that age or country, but the joint and accordant testimony of that innumerable company of Saints, whom we are bound to follow. They are the accents of the Church Catholic and Apostolic as it manifests itself in England. Surely, if we did but proceed on the great principle above described, of acting towards duties which we cannot fulfil exactly, did we take what is given us, and use it not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but with a cheerful obedience, did we receive the Creed as our Gospel, embrace and act upon the doctrine of our Services, and if anywhere we differed, differ in silence, we should of ourselves without effort revive all those visible tokens of the Church's sovereignty, the want of which is our present excuse for disobedience. Surely, "the kingdom of God is within us;" we have but to recognize the Church in faith, and it rises before our eyes.

Nor is there any thing in the profession of the sects around us to disturb us. They contradict each other, or rather themselves. They pretend to no Antiquity, they have no stability, no consistency; they do not interfere with our doctrine and our pretensions at all, no more than the schools of philosophy and science. They have taken a different line and occupy a different province. As well might it be said that astrologers interfere with prophecy; as those who out of their own judgment conjecture the doctrine of Christ, with its traditionary delivery through His appointed stewards.

The only real difficulty in our path arises from the pretensions of the Romanists who are among us. They profess to be the Church and to teach the Catholic Faith as well as we, but not as we do. Which then is to be believed? but even here there is no such difficulty in our path as opponents would be glad to create. Assuming, as our present argument leads us to do, that they and we are both branches of the one Catholic Church, I say the difference of doctrine between Rome and us is little of a practical difficulty in our following the Church, or of a drawback upon our certainty and comfort in the Anglican communion. Indeed, the two rival systems, agreeing amid their differences in points which they each hold to be the highest truths, and which sectaries more or less undervalue, afford a remarkable attestation to the Apostolical origin of these. Both profess the Apostles' Creed. Both use substantially the same common Prayer, ours indeed being actually but a selection from theirs. It is nothing to the purpose in this place what and how great the errors of Romanism are in practice. We know they are very serious; but I am speaking of its professions, with which alone at this instant I am concerned. But the doctrines of Three Persons in One indivisible Divine Nature; of the union of two Natures, Divine and Human, in the One Person of Christ; of the imputation of Adam's sin in his descendants; of the death of Christ to reconcile God the Father to us

sinners; the application of His merits through external rites; the singular efficacy and mysteriousness of Sacraments; the Apostolical ministry; the duty of unity; the necessity of good works; these and other doctrines are maintained, and maintained as the chief doctrines of the Gospel, both by us and them. And our very differences in other matters, and our hostility towards each other increase, I say, the force of our unanimity where it exists.

On the other hand, the very fact of those differences throws a corresponding uncertainty over those points which Rome maintains by herself; such as the existence of Purgatory, the supremacy of the Roman see, and the Infallibility of the Church.

If, in answer to this statement, it be urged that the peculiar claim set up by Rome to be the true Church to the exclusion of ourselves, is so serious as to perplex the inquirer, and almost to lead him to join himself to her communion as the safest course, whatever be the identity of doctrine between the two systems on greater points, let it be considered whether there be not some peculiarities hanging about her, which are sufficient from the same prudential motives to keep us at a distance from her. Our Lord said of false prophets, "By their fruits shall ye know them;" and, however the mind may be entangled theoretically, yet surely it will fall upon certain marks in Rome which seem intended to convey to the simple and honest inquirer a solemn warning to keep clear of her, while

she carries them about her. Such are her denying the cup to the laity, her idolatrous worship of the Blessed Virgin, her Image-worship, her recklessness in anathematizing, and her schismatical and overbearing spirit. I conceive, then, on the whole, that while Rome confirms by her accordant witness our own teaching in all greater things, she does not tend by her novelties, and violence, and threats, to disturb the practical certainty of Catholic doctrine, or to seduce from us any sober and conscientious inquirer.

And here I end, at last, my remarks on Fundamentals, in which I have been unavoidably led, partly to repeat, partly to take for granted, some portions of the preceding Lectures.

LECTURE XI.

ON SCRIPTURE AS THE RECORD OF FAITH.

It will perhaps be questioned, whether the foregoing view of Catholic Tradition and the Fundamentals of the Church, is consistent with the supremacy of Holy Scripture in questions of faith. That it is not consistent with present popular notions on the subject I am quite aware; but it may be that those notions are wrong, and that the foregoing view, which, is received from and maintained by our great divines, is right. If it could be proved contrary to any thing they have elsewhere maintained, this would be to accuse them of inconsistency, which I leave to our enemies to do. However, I will not content myself with a mere appeal to authority, but will argue the question on grounds of reason. In this, then, and the two following Lectures, I propose to discuss the question of what is sometimes called "the Rule of Faith;" and to show, that nothing that has gone before is inconsistent

with the reverence, gratitude, and submission with which we should receive Scripture.

The sixth Article speaks as follows: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

Now, this statement is very plain and clear except in one point, viz. who is to be the *judge* what is and what is not contained in Scripture. Our Church is silent on this point,—very emphatically so. This is worth observing; in truth, she does not admit, strictly speaking, of any judge at all, in the sense in which Romanists and Protestants contend for one; and in this point, as in others, holds a middle course between extreme theories. Romanism, as we all know, maintains the existence of a Judge of controversies, nay, and an infallible one, that is, the Church Catholic. It considers, that the Pope, in General Council, can infallibly decide on the meaning of Scripture, as well as infallibly discriminate between Apostolic and spurious Traditions. Again, the multitude of Protestants also maintain the existence of a judge of Scripture doctrine, but not one and the same to all, but a different one to each individual. They consider every man his own judge; they hold that every man may and must read Scripture for him-

self, and judge about its meaning, and make up his mind for himself; nay, is, as regards himself, and practically, an infallible judge of its meaning; —infallible, certainly, for were the whole new creation against him, Bishops, Doctors, Martyrs, Saints, the Holy Church Universal, the very companions of the Apostles, the unanimous suffrage of the most distinct times and places, and the most gifted and holiest men, yet according to the popular doctrine, though he was aware of this, he ought ultimately to rest in his own interpretations of Scripture, and to follow his Private Judgment, however sorry he might be to differ from such authorities.

Thus both Protestantism and Romanism hold the existence of an authoritative judge of the sense of Scripture; whereas our Article preserves a significant silence about it; which agrees with our mode of treating the subject in other passages of our formularies. For, in truth, we neither hold that the Catholic Church is an infallible judge of Scripture, nor that each individual may judge for himself; but that the Church has *authority*, and that individuals may judge for themselves outside the range of that authority. This is no matter of words, but a very clear and practically important distinction, as will soon appear.

The Church is not a *judge* of the sense of Scripture in the common sense of the word, but a *witness*. If indeed, the word judge be taken to mean what it means in the Courts of Law, one vested

with authority to declare the received appointments and usages of the realm, and with power to enforce them, then the Church is a judge,—but not of Scripture, but of Tradition. On the contrary, both Protestant sectaries and Romanists consider their supposed judge to be a judge not merely of past facts, of precedents, custom, belief, and the like, but to have a direct power over Scripture, to contemplate questions of what is *true* and *false* in opinion, to have a special gift by divine illumination, a gift guaranteed by promise, of discerning the Scripture sense without perceptible human *Media*, to act under a guidance, and as if inspired, though not really so. Whether any such gift was once destined for mankind or not, it avails not to inquire; we consider it is not given in fact, and both Romanists and Protestants hold it is given. We, on the other hand, consider the Church as a witness, a keeper and witness of Catholic Tradition, and in this sense invested with authority, just as in political matters, an ambassador, possessed of instructions from his government, would speak with authority. But, unless in such sense as attaches to an ambassador, the Church, in our view of her office, is not a judge. She bears witness to a fact, that such and such a doctrine, or such a sense of Scripture, has ever been received and came from the Apostles; the proof of this lies first in her own unanimity throughout her various branches, next in the writings of the Ancient Fathers; and she acts upon

this her witness as the executive does in civil matters, and is responsible for it; but she does not undertake of herself to determine the sense of Scripture, she has no immediate power over it, she but alleges and submits to what is ancient and Catholic. The mere Protestant, indeed, and the Romanist may use Antiquity; but it is as a mere material by which the supreme judge, the spiritual mind, whether collective or individual, forms his decisions, as pleadings in his court, he being above them, and having an inherent right of disposing of them. We, on the contrary, consider Antiquity and Catholicity to be the real guides, and the Church their organ. For instance, in the 20th Article, a distinction is made between rites and doctrines, and it is affirmed the Church *has* power over the one, but not over the other; "the Church hath *power to decree* rites and ceremonies, and *authority* in controversies of faith." Again, in the Canon of 1571, the rule of deciding these controversies is given: "Preachers shall be careful not to preach aught to be religiously held and believed by the people, except what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and *collected from that very doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops*."

The Act of Queen Elizabeth, though proceeding from the laity and since repealed, expresses the opinion of the age which imposed the Articles, and it speaks to the same purport as this Canon. It

determines that "such matter and cause" only shall be adjudged to be heresy, as heretofore has been adjudged to be so, "by authority of the Canonical Scriptures, or by *some of the first four General Councils*, or by any *other* General Council wherein the same was declared heresy by the express and plain words of the said Canonical Scriptures."

The present Church, then, in our view of her office, is not so much a judge of Scripture as a witness of Catholic Truth delivered to her in the first ages, whether by Councils, or by Fathers, or in whatever other way.

And if she does not claim any gift of interpretation for herself, in the high points in question, much less does she allow individuals to pretend to it. Explicit as our Articles are in asserting that the doctrines of faith are contained and must be pointed out in Scripture, yet they give no hint that private persons may presume to search Scripture independently of external help, and to determine for themselves what is saving. The Church has a prior claim to do so, but even the Church asserts it not, but hands over the office to Catholic Antiquity. In what our Articles say of Holy Scripture as the document of proof, exclusive reference is had to *teaching*. It is not said that individuals are to infer the faith, but that the Church is to prove it from Scripture; not that individuals are to learn

it, but are to be taught it. The Church is bound ever to test and verify her doctrine by Scripture throughout her course of instruction. She must take care to show her children that she keeps Scripture in mind, and is ruling, guiding, steadying herself by it. In Sermons and Lectures, in catechisings and controversy, she must ever appeal to Scripture, draw her arguments from Scripture, explore and develope Scripture, imitate Scripture, build up her form of doctrine on Scripture rudiments. The sole question, I say, in the Articles is *how the Church is to teach.* Thus, in the sixth it is said, that nothing but what is contained in Scripture, or may be proved by it, is to be "*required* of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith." And the 20th still more clearly: "It is not lawful *for the Church to ordain* any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may *it so expound* one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the *Church* be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to *decree* anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to *enforce* anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." It does not say what individuals may do, but what the Church may not do. In like manner, the Canon of 1571 is concerning the duty of *preachers;* the question whether individuals may exercise a right of Private Judgment on the

text of Scripture in matters of faith is not even contemplated.

Such then are the respective places to be assigned to the Church of the day and to her members in regard to the interpretation of Scripture. Neither individual, nor Bishop, nor Convocation, nor Council, may venture to decline the *Catholic interpretation* of its sacred mysteries. We have as little warrant for rejecting Ancient Consent as for rejecting Scripture itself; our Private Judgment is as much and as little infringed by the yoke of the Catholic sense as by the yoke of Scripture itself. Scripture is an infringement on our Private Judgment. It demands our assent; it threatens us if we refuse it; and towards it, too, we may exercise what we presumptuously call the right of Private Judgment. We may reject Scripture as we reject Antiquity, and we may take the consequences of what in the next world will be seen to be either unavoidable ignorance or self-will. It will be observed, that I am speaking all along of *necessary* doctrine, or the faith once delivered; for in matters of inferior moment, both the Church and the individual have room to exercise their own powers; the individual to judge for himself, and the Church to give her judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; and that for this simple reason, either that Scripture or Tradition is obscure, indeterminate, or silent.

But such a necessity is not a privilege, but the absence of a privilege, and such an exercise of judgment is not a boast but a responsibility on either side. How the Church and the individual adjust their respective judgments, has been considered in the last Lecture; and is a mere case of relative duties, as that between a master and scholar, or parent and child.

We have now cleared the way to another important principle of the Anglican system, in which with equal discrimination it takes middle ground between Romanism and mere Protestantism. Our Church adheres to a double Rule[1], Scripture and Catholic Tradition, and considers that in all matters necessary to salvation both safeguards are vouchsafed to us, and both the Church's judgment and private judgment superseded; whereas the Romanist considers that points of faith may rest on Tradition without Scripture, and the mere Protestant that they may be drawn from Scripture without the witness of Tradition. That she requires *Scripture*

[1] "With them," the Romanists, "both Scripture and Fathers are, as to the sense, under the correction and control of the present Church; with us the present Church says nothing, but under the direction of Scripture and Antiquity taken together, one as the rule, the other as the pattern or interpreter. Among them, the present Church speaks by Scripture and Fathers; with us, Scripture and Fathers speak by the Church. . . . Two witnesses are better than one, though one be superior."—*Waterland, Eccles. Antiq.* 8, 9.

sanction is plain from the Articles; that she requires *Catholic* sanction is plain from the Athanasian Creed, which, in propounding the necessary faith of a Christian, says not a word about Scripture, resting it upon its being *Catholic* [1]; that she requires both is plain from the Canon quoted more than once, which declares nothing to be the subject of religious belief except what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Bible, and collected out of it by the Catholic doctors.

This being the state of the case, the phrase 'Rule of Faith,' which is now commonly taken to mean the Bible by itself, would seem, in the judgment of the English Church, properly to belong to the Bible and Catholic Tradition taken together. These two together make up a joint rule [2]; Scripture is interpreted by Tradition, Tradition verified by Scripture; Tradition gives form to the doctrine, Scripture gives life; Tradition teaches, Scripture proves. And hence both the one and the other have, according to the occasion, been called by our writers the Rule of

[1] *E. g.* "It is necessary that he hold the *Catholic* faith;" "we are forbidden by the *Catholic religion;*" "this is the *Catholic* faith, which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved." It is quite certain that Protestantism, as we experience it in this day, would have worded it, "This is the Scriptural faith," &c. &c.

[2] "The Scriptures and the Creed are not two different Rules of Faith, but one and the same Rule, dilated in Scripture, contracted in the Creed."—Bramhall, Works, p. 402.

Faith, sometimes the Catholic Creed, sometimes Scripture; not as if that particular source of truth which was not mentioned at this or that time, was thereby excluded, but as is implied throughout, the question not lying between the Creed and Scripture, but relating to the Church and the individual. Scripture, when illuminated by the "Catholic Religion," or the Catholic Religion when fortified by Scripture, may either of them be called the Gospel committed to the Church, dispensed to the individual [1].

And now, having stated as perspicuously as may be, what seems to be the English doctrine, I have to proceed next to the proof of that part of it which has not yet come into discussion. The grounds on which Catholic Tradition is authoritative have been explained; it follows to inquire into the reasons for considering Scripture as the document of proof, as our Sixth Article declares it to be. In what remains of this Lecture I shall but state the different lines of argument which have been adopted with this view, and make some remarks upon them.

Now Protestants sometimes argue, that the Word of God must *necessarily* be written; because how else could we be sure of its authenticity and integrity? that the notion of a revelation involves

[1] The Articles do not introduce the term, "Rule of Faith," at all.

its being written, else the very object of the revelation would be defeated. They have been led to take this ground in rivalry of the Romanists, who have adopted the very same antecedent line of argument, in behalf of the Church's infallibility, as if the revelation would not really be such, if it left room for various and interminable questions concerning the contents of it. Chillingworth, for instance, uses the following language: "The Scripture is . . . . a sufficient rule for those to judge by who believe it to be the word of God, (as the Church of England and the Church of Rome both do,) what they are to believe and what they are not to believe. . . . . And my reason hereof is convincing and demonstrative, because *nothing is necessary to be believed but what is plainly revealed*[1]." Now in spite of the great name of this author, I cannot allow that a revelation, if made, must necessarily be plain, or that faith requires clear knowledge; and that in consequence the uncertain character, supposing it, of Catholic Tradition is a decisive objection to its being considered a divine informant in religious matters. And, in making this avowal, I defend myself by the greater name of Bishop Butler.—"*We are not in any sort able to judge,*" says that profound thinker, "whether it were to have been expected, that the Revelation should have been committed to writing; or left to

[1] Chillingworth, Answ. ii. 104.

be handed down, and consequently corrupted by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it, if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will [1]." Indeed it certainly does seem presumptuous for a creature, not to say a sinner, to take upon him to say, "I will believe nothing, unless I am told in the clearest conceivable form." The utmost that can be safely advanced antecedently, is, that, part of the revelation being confessedly written, it is likely that the whole is, whatever weight attaches to this presumption. Facts, too, are inconsistent with this line of argument; from Adam to Abraham there seems to have been no written revelation at all. Again, it is undeniable that the Gospel has been before now preached, and successfully too, where the written word was unknown; if then the argument in dispute be correct, the people addressed ought to have dismissed the preachers, refused to hear any thing, because they could not know all, and remained in heathenism. Further, it is not true that a traditionary doctrine cannot be "plainly revealed;" for the abolition of the seventh day rest, comes to us upon Tradition. If the maxim in question were sound, we should have "convincing and demonstrative reason" for disbelieving it. But if Tradition may convey to us one doctrine, it surely

[1] Anal. part ii. c. iii.

may convey others also. I say there is no *antecedent necessity* for the written word containing the whole of the Gospel, true though it be, that it does contain it.

Others have considered that Scripture bears witness to its own sufficiency and perfection in matters of doctrine. And to prove this, they bring forward such texts as 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," &c.; which speaks of the *Old* Testament, before the New was even completed, much less collected into a volume, and therefore proves, if any thing, that the Old Testament is sufficient without the New, or else that *every* Scripture, every separate book, is a Canon. Or, again, it might plausibly be argued, if such strong terms are used of the Old, and yet the New is not excluded from the Canon, but rather is the most important part of it, it follows that, even had the New been so spoken of, yet doctrines might have remained behind for Tradition to supply. And so far I suppose is certain, whatever comes of it, that clearly as Scripture speaks of the divine inspiration of its writers, yet it no where says that it, by itself, contains all necessary doctrine. Indeed from the beginning to the end of the New Testament there is no recognition even of its own existence, no reflection on itself, no putting forward of its claims as a *written* document. We simply meet with our Saviour and His Apostles' teaching, and their respective claim of authority for their own words and

their own persons, and this for the most part *historically* conveyed *in* the books of which it is composed. The last words of the Apocalypse are, I suppose, the sole great exception to this remark, the sole declaration in the books of the New Testament, of an *exclusive* character, and surely they cannot be considered sufficient in themselves to establish so bold and eventful a negative, viz. that nothing is necessary doctrine but what is in it.

Others, accordingly, argue from the analogy of the Jewish Law that the Christian Law also must be written. But why should the analogy between the Dispensations hold in this point? does it hold in all points in which Scripture is silent as to its not holding? The Protestantism of the day surely would not gain by the recognition of such a rule. Again, it might plausibly be argued that the Jewish Covenant was one of formal enactments, of rites and ceremonies, and therefore required a written word, but that the Gospel is of the spirit, not of the letter; either then that the New Testament must be obeyed in all points literally, or that perchance it is not the whole of the revelation; and no party in the controversy consider themselves bound literally to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, to wash each other's feet, to have all things in common. It might be added that, though the Gospel has definite doctrines and rites, as well as the Jewish Law, yet that the *Catholicity* of the Tradition, which was wanting under the Law,

may supply the office of a written word. I mean to say, that the analogy of the Jewish Law is an insufficient ground on which to reject Tradition from the Gospel revelation; it being a means of Truth, ample and adequate in its nature, and already employed by Providence in conveying to us the New Testament itself.

Such are some of the most approved methods at the present day, for proving that Scripture, and Scripture only, is of supreme authority in matters of faith. Another and acuter line of argument is to call on those who deny it to prove their point;—if there be anything besides Scripture equal to Scripture, to produce it, and give reasons in its behalf. In other words, it grants their principle and denies their matter of fact. And certainly it does seem as if the *onus probandi*, as it is called, lay with the Romanists, not with us. Such, then, has been the course pursued by some of our greatest writers, as Hooker, who observes, "They which add Traditions, as a part of supernatural necessary truth, have not the truth, but are in error. For they only plead, that whatsoever God revealeth as necessary for all Christian men to do or believe, the same we ought to embrace, whether we have received it by writing or otherwise, *which no man denieth;* when that which they should confirm, who claim so great reverence unto Traditions, is, that the same Traditions are necessary to be acknowledged

divine and holy. For we do not reject them, only because they are not in the Scripture, but because they are neither in Scripture, *nor can otherwise sufficiently by any reason be proved to be of God.* That which is of God, and may be evidently proved to be so, *we deny not, but it hath in his kind, although unwritten, yet the self-same force and authority with the written laws of God*[1]." Such is the judgment of this great author, who sets us right as to the sense in which Tradition is inadmissible, viz., not in the abstract, and before inquiry, but in the particular case; not as being an uncertain mode of conveying religious truth, as requiring care and thought, on our part, and after all leaving us in some degree of doubt, which is the objection noticed above, but because, in matter of fact, certain given Traditions, (so called,) as the Roman, *after* inquiry, turned out not to be Traditions.

Yet this mode of understanding the Sixth Article would seem to lie open to two serious objections. First, the matter of fact is not at all made out that there are no Traditions of a trustworthy nature. For instance, it is proved by traditionary information only, (for there is no other way), that the text of Scripture is not to be taken literally, concerning our washing one another's feet, while the command to celebrate the Lord's supper is to be obeyed in

[1] Hooker, Eccl. Pol. i. 14.

the letter. Again, it is only by Tradition that we have any safe and clear rule for changing the weekly feast from the seventh to the first day.

Again, our divines, such as Bramhall, Bull, Pearson, and Patrick, believe that the Blessed Mary was "Ever Virgin," as the Church has called her; but Tradition was their only informant on the subject. Thus there are true Traditions still remaining to us.

Perhaps it may be said, however, that all that the argument under review really denies is, the existence of any important Traditions, any points of faith, affecting our salvation. But then follows a still more difficult question, as to what *are* necessary points of faith, and how they are to be defined. We say Scripture contains all necessary doctrines; and why? because there happen to be none *except* in Scripture. Now there are true Traditions extant of some kind, as by the argument is granted, and such as we even act upon; perhaps then *they* are necessary. How do we know they are not? The common answer would be, because they are not in Scripture; but this is the very point to be proved. To this it may be replied that assuming the Creed is the collection of necessary truths, since there is not one of its Articles but what may be proved from Scripture; it follows that the Sixth Article only means to say that for proving of the Articles of the Creed we do not want Tradition, Scripture is enough. This answer seems so

far unexceptionable; yet it does not hold against the second objection which I have to notice to the line of argument under consideration. This lies in the wording of the Article itself. The Article is certainly engaged in stating a great *principle;* it begins with a formal enunciation, as if uttering what it felt to be a bulwark of the Truth, and an antidote against the errors of the time. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man." How is this fulfilled, by merely proving that it *so happens* that no doctrine coming from the Apostles is to be found anywhere else, that it *so happens* the Creed can be proved from Scripture? Surely the Article speaks, not as if narrating a matter of history, but of doctrine, not a conclusion to be arrived at, but a principle to start with.

These, then, are the difficulties in the proof of our Sixth Article, to which Romanists add the particular structure of the New Testament. They observe it is but an incomplete document on the very face of it. There is no harmony or consistency in its parts. There is no code of commandments, no list of fundamentals. It comprises four lives of Christ, written for different portions of the Church, and not tending to make up one whole. Then follow epistles written to particular Churches on particular occasions, and preserved, (as far as there can be accident in the world,) accidentally.

Some books, as the Epistle to the Laodiceans, are altogether lost; others are preserved only in a translation, as perhaps the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the Epistle to the Hebrews; some delivered down with barely sufficient evidence for their genuineness, as the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Nor were they generally received as one volume till the fourth century. These are disproofs, it may be said, of any intention, either in the course of Providence, or in the writers, that the very books of Scripture, though inspired, should be *the* Canon of faith, that is, that they should bound and complete it. Also, the office of the Church as the "keeper of Holy Writ," seems to make it probable that she was intended to interpret, perhaps to supply what Scripture left irregular and incomplete. On the other hand, the circumstance that religious truths can be conveyed by ordinances, or by Catholic Tradition, as well as by writing, seems an intimation that there is such a second Rule of Faith, equally authoritative and binding with Scripture itself.

This being the state of the case, the line of argument I would adopt is one which many of our most eminent Divines have pursued, and among them the writer of the first Homily. Nor let any one be startled at all this discordance of opinion among our Divines, in their mode of proving one of the great principles of Protestantism, as if it reflected upon the wisdom or soundness of the principle itself. Above all, let not Romanists venture

to take advantage of it, lest we retort upon them the vacillations, absurdities, intrigues, and jealousies displayed in those deliberations of divines which have attended their General Councils, and which issued, as they conceive, in infallible decisions. It is well known that the Church of Rome reckons no part of the *process* by which the Fathers in Council arrive at their final decrees to be of any authority. She conceives they are invisibly overruled, in whatever manner, to arrive at it. And accordingly on inspecting their deliberations we shall find them so full of both moral and intellectual defects, that we shall agree with the Romanists that, if their conclusions be infallible, it clearly is in consequence of some miraculous guardianship, and not from any tendency in the human agency employed to produce that result. But surely a theory which serves plausibly to evade a difficulty in Romanism, may, with more speciousness, and without evasion, be applied to the case under consideration. Which, or whether any of the reasons already mentioned, or presently to be mentioned, was adopted as the ground of the Article by its framers, matters not; or whether we can ascertain it, or adopt it ourselves. It matters not whether or not they only happened to come right on what are, in a logical point of view, faulty premisses. They had no time for theories of any kind; and to require theories at their hand, argues an ignorance of human nature, and of the way in which Truth is

struck out in the course of life. Common sense, chance, moral perception, genius, the great discoverers of principles, do not reason. They have no arguments, no grounds; they see the Truth, but they do not know how they see it; and if at any time they attempt to prove it, it is as much a matter of experiment with them, as if they had to find a road to a distant mountain which they see with the eye, and they get entangled, embarrassed, and perchance overthrown in the superfluous endeavour. It is the second-rate men, though most useful in their place, who prove, reconcile, finish, and explain. Probably the popular feeling of the sixteenth century saw the Bible to be the word of God, so as nothing else is His word, by the power of a strong sense, by a sort of moral instinct, or by a happy augury. Even though the first Protestants proceeded to give insufficient reasons for their belief, or at times stated it unguardedly or extravagantly, it would not follow that they did not discern and speak a great Truth. Nor does it follow that we, to whom they have left the task of harmonizing their doctrines, are mistaken, because we are at times at fault, and dispute among ourselves what is the best way of setting about it.

If asked, then, how I know that the Bible contains all truth necessary to be believed in order to salvation, I simply reply, as the first Homily implies, that the early Church so accounted it, that there is a "Consent of Catholic Fathers" in its

favour. No matter, whether or not we can see a principle in it; no matter, whether or not we can prove it from reason or Scripture; we receive it simply on historical evidence. The early Fathers so held it, and we throw the burden of our belief, if it be a burden, on them. It is quite impossible they should so have accounted it, except from Apostolic intimations, that it was so to be. Stronger evidence for its truth is scarcely conceivable; for if any but the Scripture had pretensions to be an oracle of faith, would not the first Successors of the Apostles be that oracle? must not they, if any, have possessed the authoritative traditions of the Apostles? They surely must have felt, as much as we do, the unsystematic character of the Epistles, the silence of Scripture on the doctrine of its own canonicity, or whatever other objections can be now urged against the doctrine; and yet they certainly held it.

If this line of argument can be maintained, there will be this especial force in it as addressed to Romanists. They are accustomed to taunt us with inconsistency, as if we used the Tradition of the Church only when and as far as we could not avoid it; for instance, for the establishment of the divinity of Scripture, but not for the doctrines of the Gospel. "Were it not for the testimony of the Church," they say, "we should not know what books are, what books are not inspired; they do not speak for themselves, or at least when they do

they scarcely can be admitted as their own vouchers. Yet a Protestant will quote them implicitly as divine, while he scoffs and rails at that informant to whom he is indebted for his knowledge." Protestants have felt the cogency of this representation; and have been led to explore other modes of proving the genuineness of the New Testament, which might set them free from the first ages of Christianity. Paley, for instance, has shown from the undesigned coincidences of the Acts and Epistles, that they bear with them an internal evidence of their truth. Others have enlarged upon what they conceive to be the beautiful and wise adaptation of the Christian doctrines to each other, which, in the words of one writer is such as to show that "the system" of the Apostles "is true in the nature of things, even were they proved to be impostors[1]." Ingenious as such arguments are, were they ever so sound and reverent, as they are generally irreverent, and often untenable, they do not touch the question of the divine origin of the New Testament itself, except very indirectly, nay, sometimes tend to dispense with it. Yet allowing what force we will to them, I suppose it is undeniable after all that we *do* receive the New Testament in its existing shape on Tradition, not on such refinements; for instance, we include the Second Epistle of St. Peter, we leave out St. Clement's Epistle to the

[1] Erskine's Internal Evidence, p. 17.

Corinthians simply because the Church Catholic has done so. Now this objection, whatever be its value, is fully met by the mode of proof which I have suggested; or rather a point is gained thereby. We do *not* discard the Tradition of the Fathers; we accept it; we accept it entirely; we accept its witness concerning itself and against itself; it witnesses to its own inferiority to Scripture; it witnesses, not only that Scripture is the record, but that it is the sole record of saving truth.

This is the more remarkable from the great stress which the Fathers certainly do lay on the authority of Tradition. They so represent it in its Apostolical and universal character, they so extol and defer to it, that it is difficult to see why they do not make it, what the Romanists make it, an independent informant in matters of faith; yet they do not. Whenever they formally prove a doctrine, they have recourse to Scripture; they bring forward Tradition first; they use it as a strong antecedent argument against individual heretics who profess to quote Scripture; but in Councils they ever verify it by the written Word. Now, if we choose to argue and dispute, we may call them inconsistent, and desire an explanation; but, if we will be learners in the school of Christ, we shall take things as we find them, we shall consider their conduct as a vestige and token of some Apostolic appointment, from its very singularity. It is nothing to the purpose, even though Catholic and Apostolic

Tradition be strong enough to sustain the weight of an appeal, supposing, in matter of fact, it was not so employed by the early Church. Christ surely may give to each of His instruments its own place; He has vouchsafed us two informants in saving truth, both necessary, both at hand, Tradition for statement, Scripture for proof; and it is our part rather to thank Him for His bounty, than to choose one and reject the other. Let us be content to accept the canonicity of Scripture on *faith*.

Moreover this view of the subject rids us of all questions about the abstract sufficiency and perfection of Scripture, as a document of saving truth. Romanists sometimes ask us whether some one book, as the Gospel of St. John, would have been sufficient for salvation; and, if not, whether those of the Apostles' writings which happen to remain are sufficient, considering that some of them are undoubtedly lost. We may answer, that any one book of Scripture would be sufficient, *provided* none other were given us; that the whole Volume, as we have received it, is enough, because we have no more. There is no abstract measure of what is sufficient. Faith cannot believe more than it is told. It is saving, if it believes that, be it little or great.

Lastly, it may be asked, if Scripture be, as has been above represented, but the document of appeal, and Catholic Tradition the authoritative teacher of Christians, how it is that our Articles say nothing

of Catholic Tradition, and limit Tradition to the subject-matter of Ceremonies and Rites which are not "in all places one or utterly like," "and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners?" To which I answer by asking, in turn, why the Articles contain no recognition of the *inspiration* of Holy Scripture. In truth, we must take the Articles as we find them, they are not a *system* of theology on whatever view, but a protest against certain specific errors, existing at the time they were drawn up. There are, as all parties must confess, great truths not in the Articles.

LECTURE XII.

ON SCRIPTURE AS THE RECORD OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING.

Of the two lines of proof offered in behalf of the sixth Article, which I discussed in my last Lecture, the one considered it to declare a doctrine, the other a fact; the one spoke as if Holy Scripture must contain, the other as if it happened to contain all necessary truth. Of these the former seems to me to come nearer to the real meaning of the Article, and also to the truth of the case, though the particular considerations commonly offered in proof are insufficient. Certainly, we cannot maintain the peculiar authority of the written word, on the ground of any antecedent necessity, that revelation should be written, or from the witness of Scripture itself, or from the parallel of the Jewish Law; yet there are probabilities nevertheless, which recommend the doctrine to our belief, even before going into the details of that historical testi-

mony which I consider to be the proper evidence of it.

Let us see, then, what can be said on the *primâ facie* view of the subject, in behalf of the notion that Scripture is on principle, and not only by accident, the sole Canon of our faith.

First, the New Testament is commonly called a testament or will. Indeed, the very circumstance that St. Paul calls the Gospel Revelation a Testament, and that Testaments are necessarily written, and that he parallels it to the Mosaic Testament, and that the Mosaic was written, prepares us to expect that the Gospel will be written also. And the name of Testament actually given to the sacred volume confirms this anticipation. It evidently is a mark of special honor; and it assigns a most significant purpose to the written Word, such as Tradition, however clearly Apostolical, cannot reach. Even granting Tradition and Scripture both to come from the Apostles, it does not therefore follow that their written Word was not, under God's over-ruling guidance, designed for a particular purpose, for which their Word unwritten was not designed.

Next, we learn from the testimony of the early Church, that Scripture and Scripture only is inspired. This explains *how* it may be called in an especial manner the Testament or Will of our Lord and Saviour. Scripture has a gift which Tradition has not; it is fixed, tangible, accessible, readily applicable, and besides all this perfectly true in all

its parts and relations; in a word, it is a sacred *text*. Tradition does not convey to us any form of words or of discourses, but things only; doctrine, that is, embodied in diversified language, which in all its varieties expresses the same ideas, but is avouched as literally Apostolic in none. It gives us little or nothing which can be *argued from*. We can argue only from a text; we can argue freely only from an inspired text. Thus Scripture is in itself specially fitted for that office which we assign it in our Article; to be a repository of manifold and various doctrine, a means of proof, a standard of appeal, an umpire and test between truth and falsehood in all emergencies. It thus becomes the nearest possible approach to the perpetual presence of the Apostles in the Church; whereas Tradition, being rather a collection of separate truths, facts, and usages, is wanting in flexibility and adaptation to the subtle questions and difficulties which from time to time arise. A new heresy, for instance, would be refuted by Tradition only negatively, on the very ground that it was new; but by Scripture positively, by the use of its text, and by suitable inferences from it.

Here, then, are two tokens that Scripture really is what we say it is. But now we proceed to a third peculiarity, to which more time shall be devoted.

Scripture alone contains what remains to us of our Lord's teaching. If there be a portion of

revelation, sacred beyond other portions, distinct and remote in its nature from the rest, it must be the words and works of the Eternal Son Incarnate. He is the One Prophet of the Church, as He is our One Priest and King. His history is as far above any other possible revelation, as heaven is above earth; for in it we have literally the sight of Almighty God in His judgments, thoughts, attributes, and deeds, and His mode of dealing with us His creatures. Now this special revelation is in Scripture, and Scripture only; Tradition has no part in it.

To enter into the force of this remark, we should carefully consider the peculiar character of our Lord's recorded words and works when on earth. They will be found to come even professedly, as the declarations of a Lawgiver. In the Old Covenant, Almighty God first of all spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote them. So our Lord first spoke His own Gospel, both of promise and of precept, on the Mount, and His Evangelists have recorded it. Further, when He delivered it, He spoke by way of parallel to the Ten Commandments. And His style, moreover, corresponds to the authority which He assumes. It is of that solemn, measured, and severe character, which bears on the face of it tokens of belonging to one who spake as none other man could speak. The Beatitudes, with which His Sermon opens, are an instance of this

incommunicable style, which befitted, as far as human words could befit, God Incarnate.

Nor is this style peculiar to the Sermon on the Mount. All through the Gospels it is discernible, distinct from any other part of Scripture, showing itself in solemn declarations, canons, sentences, or sayings, such as legislators propound, and scribes and lawyers comment on. Surely every thing our Saviour did and said is characterized by mingled simplicity and mystery. His emblematical actions, His typical miracles, His parables, His replies, His censures, all are evidences of a legislature in germ, afterwards to be developed, a code of divine truth which was ever to be before men's eyes, to be the subject of investigation and interpretation, and the guide in controversy. "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" "But, I say unto you," are the tokens of a supreme Teacher and Prophet.

And thus the Fathers speak of His teaching. "His sayings," observes Justin, "were short and concise; for He was no rhetorician, but His word was the power of God [1]." And Basil, in like manner: "Every deed, and every word of our Saviour Jesus Christ is a canon of piety and virtue. When then thou hearest word or deed of His, do not hear it as by the way, or after a simple and carnal manner, but enter into the depth of His contemplations,

[1] Apol. i. 14.

become a communicant in truths mystically delivered to thee [1]."

As instances in point, I would refer, first, to His discourse with Nicodemus. We can hardly conceive but He must have spoken during His visit much more than is told us in St. John's Gospel; but so much is preserved as bears that peculiar character which became a Divine Lawgiver, and was intended for perpetual use in the Church. It consists of concise and pregnant enunciations on which volumes of instructive comment might be written. Every verse is a canon of Divine Truth.

His discourse to the Jews in the fifth chapter of St. John's Gospel, is perhaps a still more striking instance.

Again, observe how the Evangelists heap His words together, though unconnected with each other, as if under a divine intimation, and with the consciousness that they were providing a code of doctrine and precept for the Church. St. Luke, for instance, at the end of his ninth chapter: "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest; and Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by Him, and said unto them, *Whosoever shall receive this child in My name, receiveth Me; and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me; for He that*

[1] Constit. Monast. i.

is least among you all, the same shall be great. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us; and Jesus said unto him, *Forbid him not, for he that is not against us* is for us. And when His disciples, James and John, saw [that the Samaritans did not receive Him] they said Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not manner of spirit ye are of; *for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.* And a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest; and Jesus said unto Him, *Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.* And He said to another, Follow Me; and he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father; Jesus said unto him, *Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.* And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee, but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house; and Jesus said unto him, *No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.*" Here are six solemn declarations made one after another, with little or no connexion.

The twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew would supply a similar series of sacred maxims; or again,

the eighteenth; in which the separate verses, though succeeding one the other with somewhat more of connexion, are yet complete each in itself, and very momentous.

No one can doubt, indeed, that as the narratives of His miracles are brought together in one as divine signs, so His sayings are accumulated as lessons.

Or take again the very commencement of His prophetical ministrations, and observe how His words run. He opens His mouth with accents of grace, but still they fall into short and expressive sentences. The first: "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" The second: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The third: "Woman, what am I to thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The fourth: "Take these things hence; make not My Father's house a house of merchandise. The fifth: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The same peculiarity shows itself in His conflict with Satan. He strikes and overthrows him, as David slew the giant, with a sling and with a stone, with three words selected out of the Old Testament: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

In like manner, what He from time to time

at His crucifixion even go by the name of His seven last words.

Again: His parables, and often His actions, as His washing His disciples' feet and paying the tribute, are instances of a similar peculiarity.

Now, let it be observed, I am not venturing to conjecture what His usual mode of conversation was; I am only speaking of it so far as it was of a public and formal character, intended for everlasting memory in the Church. But who else among the Prophets, from the beginning of the Bible to the end, thus speaks "in proverbs," to use His own account of His teaching? Whose incidental sayings but His are thus collected and preserved by the inspired writers[1]? And thus, according to the text which He Himself quotes, we do really live by every word which proceedeth from His mouth. Certainly this separates Him on the whole from other prophets, whatever exceptions there may be to the general rule, or whatever resemblance St. James and St. John may bear to Him in their Epistles.

Such is the character of our Lord's teaching; impressed with the signs of that sovereign dignity which we know belonged to Him; and, being such as it is, it surely indisposes us to look for it elsewhere than where we originally find it. For, as

[1] *E. g.* David's saying, recorded 2 Sam. xxiii. 17., is a similar instance.

any one may see, it has not the character of diffuse and lavish communications; it is not so exuberant, various, or incomplete, as to lead us to expect portions of it scattered through the records of Antiquity. We have actual evidence from the Gospels themselves, that, in the midst of His condescension, our Lord was sparing in His words and actions, and that every single deed or word was in one sense complete. To His own indeed, to those who lay upon His breast at supper, or conversed with Him for forty days, He might vouchsafe to tell much, whether in the way of prophecy, or interpretation of Scripture, or Church discipline; and the result, nay, perhaps portions of such instructions, remain among us to this day. But I speak of the formal declarations of His word and will; to which His Apostles' witness, derived from His private teaching, would be subordinate and as a comment; and these, I say, are not prodigally bestowed. He utters the same precept again and again, and repeats His miracles. The very manner, then, of His teaching, as recorded in Scripture, rather disinclines us than otherwise to expect portions of it out of Scripture; and in matter of fact it is not to be found elsewhere. Of this teaching, remarkable both from its Author and its style, Tradition contains no remains. The new Law is preserved by the four Evangelists alone. The force of this remark will be seen by considering its exceptions. One solitary instance is furnished by a passage of the Book of

Acts, where St. Paul preserves a sentence of our Lord's, which is omitted in the Gospels: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Two other precepts are preserved by Antiquity; the one by several early writers, "Be ye approved money-changers;" the other by St. Jerome, "Be ye never very glad, but when ye see your brother live in charity [1]."

Here then is a broad line of distinction between the written and the unwritten word. Whatever be the treasures of the latter, it has not this pre-eminent gift, the custody of our Lord's teaching. I might, then, for argument's sake even grant to the Romanists in the abstract all that they claim for Tradition as a vehicle of truth, and then challenge them to avail themselves of this allowance; in fact, to add to the sentences of the New Law, if they can. No; the Gospels remain the sole record of Him who spake as never man spake; and it is some kind of corroboration that they are so, that they confessedly contain so much as is really to be

[1] Acts xx. 35. Origen. t. 19. in Joan. viii. 20., Hieron. quoted in Taylor Dissuasive *infra*., Jones on the Canon collects, all the sayings attributed to Christ in the writings of the four first centuries, of which three alone deserve any notice, in addition to the above, viz. those in Justin Martyr, Dial. p. 267. (as Jones quotes it), in Iren. Hær. i. 20., and in Athenag. Leg. 32. fin., which last, if it were genuine, would remarkably illustrate Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Thes. v. 26. 1 Pet. v. 14.

found in them. How is it, unless they are the formal record of the New Covenant, that they have in them all the rudiments of Christian Truth as it has ever been received by all branches of the Church, by Romanists as well as ourselves? Their containing so much is, as far as it goes, a presumption that they contain all; they seem to tend towards completeness. Romanists, I suppose, allow that Baptism and the Eucharist are the especial ordinances of the New Law, and have a certain priority of rank over the other Sacraments. Now, if they ground this on their being expressly ordained in Scripture, they seem to confess that things prescribed therein are of more importance than what is derived through the medium of Tradition. If they do not, then it rests with them to account for this singular accident, the *coincidence* of their being prescribed in Scripture, and their also being the chief ordinances of the Gospel. Certainly, coincidences such as this, lead to the surmise that Scripture is *intended* to be that which it is actually, the record of the greater matters of the Law of Christ. "Is not all that we know of the life and death of Jesus," asks Bishop Taylor, "set down in the writings of the New Testament? Is there any one miracle that ever Christ did, the notice of which is conveyed to us by Tradition? Do we know any thing that Christ did or said, but what is in Scripture? . . . How is it possible that the Scriptures should not contain all things necessary to salvation,

when of all the words of Christ, *in which certainly all necessary things to salvation must needs be contained,* or else they were never revealed, there is not any one saying, or miracle, or story of Christ, in anything that is material, preserved in any indubitable record, but in Scripture alone[1]?"

In this passage, Bishop Taylor assumes that our Lord's teaching contains all things necessary to salvation; an opinion, which, in addition to the indirect evidence resulting from the foregoing remarks, seems to be sanctioned by the concluding words of St. John. Let it be remembered, he wrote what may be considered a supplement to the three first Gospels. Surely then, the inspired Apostle speaks in the following passages as if he were sealing up the records of his Saviour's life, and of the Christian Law, after selecting from the materials which the other Evangelists had left, such additions as were necessary for the strength and comfort of faith. Surely, the following passages taken together, tend to increase the improbability already pointed out, that our faith, as to greater matters, has been turned over to the information of Tradition, however well authenticated. "And there are also *many other things* which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." "And

[1] Dissuasive, part ii. book i. § 2.

many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; *but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name.*" "*And he that saw it, bare record;* and his record is *true.* And he knoweth that he saith true, *that ye might believe* [1]." Here St. John, closing the record of our Lord's life, declares, that out of the numberless things which might be added to the former Gospels, he has added so much as is *necessary for faith;* and implies moreover, as if it were a principle, that in things supernatural proposed for our acceptance, the testimony of the original witnesses may be expected, and not such secondary information as mere Tradition at best must be accounted.

It will be replied, I suppose, that St. John is speaking of miracles, not of doctrines; as if we were not allowed to detect a great principle in the inspired text, though conveyed in a form of expression arising out of the immediate events which led to his bequeathing it to us. For he surely uses language which generalizes his statement, and makes the particular case but one instance of what he really meant. When he says, "there were many other things which Jesus did [2]," what else can he mean but simply, "much more might

[1] John xxi. 25. xx. 30, 31. xix. 35.

[2] He has just recorded a saying of Christ's.

be told concerning Him when on earth," whether of His words or works being an irrelevant distinction? It is the more strange that such an exception should be taken, though it is taken, because all parties understand the principle of extending the meaning of texts, and apply it in many important cases. Both Protestants and Romanists agree with us in understanding our Lord's "suffering little children to come unto Him," as a sanction for infant Baptism. There is nothing extravagant then in the notion of such an extended interpretation of the words before us; and in the particular instance it is sanctioned by the authority of St. Austin. He explains them as follows: "What of His own deeds and words Christ wished us to read, He bade the Apostles write, as though it had been with His own hand." Again: "The Holy Evangelist testifies that the Lord Christ *said and did* many things which are not written. Those were selected for writing *which appeared to be sufficient for the salvation of believers*[1]." St. Austin becomes in these passages a witness of our doctrine as well as our interpretation of the particular passage.

I have said all this by way of refuting what is a favourite theme with the Romanists, that the New Testament consists of *accidental* documents, and that our maintenance of its exclusive divinity is

[1] Austin de Cons. Evang. i. 54. Tract. in Joann 49. In the former passage the text is not expressly referred to.

gratuitous and arbitrary. And to this I reply, that at least there is *something* in it peculiar and singular, viz. our Lord's teaching. Now, to this representation, two objections will be made which deserve attention; first, that it narrows the Canon of Scripture within the limits of the Gospels to the exclusion of the Old Testament and the Apostolic Epistles; next, that after all, the characteristic doctrines of Christianity are found in the Epistles, not in our Lord's teaching. These I shall consider together.

Now the fact is not as the latter objection represents it. The doctrines of our faith *are* really promulgated by Christ Himself. There is no truth which St. Paul or St. John declare, which He does not anticipate. Which of them can He be said to omit? He names "the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" He announces Himself as "the Only-begotten Son, given by the Father to the world, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "the Son of Man, which is in heaven;" "having glory with the Father before the world was;" "giving His life a ransom instead of many;" and, after His resurrection, having "all power in heaven and earth." He declares that without a new birth of "water and the Spirit," there is no entrance into "the kingdom of heaven;" that except we "eat His flesh and drink His blood, there is no life in us." He prays that we may be all "one in Him, as He and His

Father are one;" and He promises to "build His Church," and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." If we had only the Gospels, we should have in them all the great doctrines of the Epistles, all the articles of the Creed; only, in consequence of our Saviour's peculiar style, as already described, His announcement of them is not assisted by the context. Every word of His is complete in itself; in half a sentence He states a mysterious truth, and passes on. And it has been ever the fallacy of heretical interpretation to measure the depth of the text by the immediate context; as, for instance, in the discourse in the tenth chapter of St. John, which ends with, "I and My Father are One;"—words which mean far more than the context requires.

And this is one main reason, it would seem, why the Epistles are vouchsafed to us; not so much to increase the Gospel, as to serve as a comment upon it, as taught by our Lord; to bring out and fix His sacred sense, lest we should by any means miss it. That this was the office of the Apostles, and not that of preaching a new and additional revelation, is surely implied by our Lord when He promises them the gift of the Holy Ghost. For instance; "These things have I spoken unto you," He says, "being yet present with you; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever*

I have said unto you." Again, after telling them they could not bear as yet to be told the whole Truth, and that the Holy Spirit would teach it them, (words, which do not imply that He had not Himself uttered it, only that He had not conveyed it home to their minds,) He proceeds: "He shall not speak of Himself, but *whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak;* and He will show you things to come. He shall *glorify Me;* for *He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you*[1]." Now whatever else these words mean, they seem to imply what the former passage expressed literally, that the Comforter would use and explain Christ's own teaching; not begin anew, but merely develope it. That some deep and heavenly mystery is implied in the words, "whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak," I doubt not; yet it seems to relate also to what took place on earth. It is part of the condescension of the Persons of the Ever-blessed Trinity, that They vouchsafe to allow the adorable secrets of heaven to be adumbrated in some inscrutable way on earth. The Eternal Son was subjected to a generation in time; He received the Spirit in time; and the Spirit proceeded from the Father to Him, and then from both, in time. The texts which speak of what took place in eternity, are also fulfilled in the economy of redemption[2]. And in like manner, I say, whatever else is meant by

[1] John xiv. 25, 26. xvi. 13, 14. [2] *E. g.* Ps. ii. 7.

the words in question, this also they must be taken to mean, that the Holy Ghost, as is expressly said in the corresponding passage, would bring Christ's words to their remembrance. The office of the Holy Ghost, then, lay in "glorifying" Christ; in illuminating, in throwing lustre upon, and drawing lustre from, all that belonged to Him, to His person, His mission, His works, His trials, His sufferings, and among the rest, His words,—in exalting Him as the Prophet of the Church, as well as her Priest and King. In one of the clauses it is added, "He will show you things to come," and this will be found to complete the description of the inspiration which the Apostles received; viz., understanding in our Lord's words, and the gift of prophecy. Their writings are actually made up of these two, prophecy and doctrine.

The same general meaning comes within the scope of a later verse of the chapter last quoted. "These things have I spoken unto you in *proverbs*; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you *plainly*," that is, in explicit words, "of the Father [1]."

To the same purport is our Lord's parting charge, recorded by another Evangelist. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

[1] John xvi. 25.

the Holy Ghost, *teaching them to keep all things, whatsoever I have commanded you*[1]." The revelation had been already made to the Apostles; it was like seed deposited in their hearts, which, under the influences of heavenly grace, would, in due season, germinate, and become "the power of God unto salvation" to all that believed.

A number of passages in the Gospels will occur to every inquirer, which take the same view of our Lord's teaching, viz., that it was not mere instruction conveyed in accidental words, but that it consisted of formal and precise sayings and actions afterwards to be opened and illustrated by the Apostles; some of these shall now be cited.

"These things understood not His disciples at the first: but, when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him."

He says to St. Peter, before washing his feet, "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

When He had bidden them keep the miracle of the Transfiguration secret till after His resurrection, "they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean."

At another time Christ says, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops."

We have a remarkable instance of this gradual illumination in the way in which they learned that the Gentiles were to be called. After His resurrection, Christ enlightened them, we know, in many things; it is said expressly, "Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." The sacred narrative continues; "and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem." Who would not have supposed that His words now at length came to their minds in their full meaning? but it was far otherwise; the Holy Ghost had not descended, and they were still ignorant of the calling of the Gentiles.

In the calling of Cornelius, however, the divine purposes were at length illustrated fully and finally; but it is very deserving of notice, that though the Holy Ghost was the gracious Agent in the revelation, as our Saviour had given them to expect, yet St. Peter, instead of regarding His guidance as a new and independent source of truth, promptly refers his increased insight into the Gospel to our Lord's teaching. "*Then remembered I* the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the

Holy Ghost." He perceived that that religion which was spirit and truth, could not be confined to place or nation.

Again; when the women came to the sepulchre, the Angels said to them, "He is not here, but is risen; *remember how He spake unto you* when He was yet in Galilee."

Further; the last chapter of St. John's Gospel seems to supply a striking instance of the religious caution with which the Apostles treated His words, resisting wrong interpretations, but there stopping, contemplating them in ignorance, rather than superseding them. "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die; yet, *Jesus said not unto him*, he shall not die; *but*, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" To *have* our Lord's words was in their judgment the principal thing, to aim at comprehending them secondary, and not to be impatiently attempted.

In this connexion, I may notice as remarkable the sameness of expression under which the three Evangelists record our Lord's consecration of the Bread in the Holy Eucharist. All three use precisely the same words, "This is My body." They were, it would seem, more bent on recording our Lord's words than interpreting them. Were the notions now popular among us true, one Evangelist would have worded it, "This is a figure of My Body;" another, "This imparts the benefits of My Body;" and a

third, "This is a pledge of receiving My Spirit." But the sacred writers seem to have understood that our Lord's words were too solemn to paraphrase. As a contrast to this, we find that Pilate's inscription on the cross is recorded by each Evangelist with some accidental variation [1].

Enough has now been said to show, not only the peculiar prerogative of the Gospels, but the position also of the Apostolic Epistles in the revelation. They are on the whole an inspired comment upon the Gospels, opening our Lord's meaning, and eliciting even from obscure or ordinary words and unpretending facts, high and heavenly truths. On the other hand, our Lord's teaching in the Gospels acts as a rule and key to the Epistles; it gives them their proportions, and adjusts their contents to their respective place and uses. So far from His teaching superseding theirs, as may at first sight be objected to the view under consideration, it rather recognizes and requires it. And, as to the Old Testament, far from being put aside on this view of the revelation, it is delivered to us on the same authority, under the seal of canonicity impressed upon it by Christ Himself. There is something beautiful in this appointment. Christ is the great

[1] John xii. 16. xiii. 7. Mark ix. 10. Matt. x. 27. Luke xxiv. 45—47. Acts xi. 16. Luke xxiv. 6. John xxi. 23. and of Matt. xxvi. 26. Mark xiv. 22. Luke xxii. 19. also 1 Cor. xi. 24. with Matt. xxvii. 37. Mark xv. 26. Luke xxiii. 38. John xix. 19.

Prophet of the Church, and His teaching is as truly her law, as His death and intercession are her life. In that teaching the whole canon centres, as for its proof, so for its harmonious adjustment. Christ recognizes the Law and the Prophets, and commissions the Apostles.

These then are some presumptions in favour of attributing a special sacredness to the New Testament over and above other sources of divine truth, however venerable. It is in very name Christ's Testament; it is an inspired text; and it contains the Canons of the New Law, dictated by Christ, commented on by His Apostles and by the Prophets beforehand. Though then, as the Romanists object, it be incomplete in form, it is not in matter; it has a hidden and beautiful design in it. Why we limit it to the *particular books* of which it is composed, will be seen in the next Lecture, in which, passing from antecedent presumptions, such as have here been discussed, I shall draw out the direct proof of the Article on which we are engaged.

LECTURE XIII.

ON SCRIPTURE AS THE DOCUMENT OF PROOF IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

SHOULD any one feel uncertain about the argument against Romanism contained in the last Lecture, he may put it aside without interfering with what goes before and after. It is intended to show, how far there is a presumption that Scripture, is what is commonly called, "the Rule of Faith," independently of the testimony of the Fathers, which is the direct and sufficient proof of it. And perhaps it may suggest profitable thoughts to those who will receive it, over and above the immediate service which it has been brought to supply.

Before proceeding to the Fathers, which I shall now do, let me, for the sake of distinctness, repeat what is the point to be proved. It is this; that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation; that is, either as being read therein or deducible therefrom; not that Scripture is the only ground of the faith, or ordinarily the guide into it

and teacher of it, or the source of all religious truth whatever, or the systematizer of it, or the instrument of unfolding, illustrating, enforcing, and applying it; but that it is the document of ultimate appeal in controversy, and the touchstone of all doctrine.

We differ, then, from the Romanist in this, not in denying that Tradition is valuable, but in maintaining that by itself, and without Scripture warrant, it does not convey to us any article necessary to salvation; in other words, that it is not a rule distinct and co-ordinate, but subordinate and ministrative. And this we hold, neither from any abstract fitness that it should be so, nor from the accident that it is so,—neither as a first principle, nor as a mere fact,—but as a doctrine taught us and acted on by the Fathers, as proved to us historically, as resting neither on argument nor on experience, but on testimony. Thus the same course is to be pursued, as in determining the Fundamentals; we must take what we have received, whether we know the reason of it or not.

The most simple and satisfactory mode of determining the question would be to find some judgment of Scripture upon it; but Scripture, as I have said, does not contemplate itself. The mention which it makes of inspiration, is rather a promise to persons, than a decision upon a document. It is a promise to the Apostles and to the Church built on them; and the Romanists ask why it need be confined to that first age any more than other

promises,—than the promise of Christ's presence where two or three are gathered together, or of the power of His ministers to remit and retain sins; or than those precepts which we still observe, as the command to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Scripture does not interpret itself, or answer objections to misinterpretations. We must betake ourselves to the early Church, and see how they understood it. We consider the Eucharist is of perpetual obligation, because the ages immediately succeeding the Apostles thought so; we consider the inspired Canon was cut short in the Apostles whose works are contained in the New Testament, and that their successors had no gift of expounding the Law of Christ such as they had, because the same ages so accounted it. They witness to their own inferiority, like John the Baptist in speaking of Christ, and we accept what they say. One passage, indeed, there is, that with which the New Testament closes, which is remarkable certainly, as seeming to anticipate the testimony of the primitive Church; I mean, the last words of the Apocalypse: and, considering their correspondence with the closing verses of the Prophet Malachi, and those of St. John's own Gospel, which is known to be supplementary, they would favour the notion that he was sealing up the revelation within the limits of the inspired volume, *supposing* any evidence could be brought that before his death such a volume existed. Any how, they demand the attention of the Romanists, especially

considering the testimony of Antiquity agrees with them, when thus interpreted. To that testimony I now proceed.

The mode pursued by the early Church in deciding points of faith seems to have been as follows. When a novel doctrine was published in any quarter, the first question which the neighbouring Bishops asked each other was, "Is this part of the Rule of Faith? has this come down to us?" The answer being in the negative, they at once silenced it on the just weight of this presumption. The prevailing opinion of the Church was a sufficient, an overpowering objection against it; nor could truth suffer from a proceeding which only subjected it, if on the protesting side, to a trial of its intrinsic life and energy. When, however, the matter came before a Council, when it was discussed, when the Fathers reasoned, proved, and decided, they never went in matters of saving faith by Tradition only, but they guided themselves by the notices of the written word, as by landmarks in their course. Tradition was no longer more than a subordinate guide, as explaining, illustrating, reconciling, applying the Scriptures. Then, as under the Old Covenant, the appeal was made "to the Law and to the Testimony," to the testament of the Saviour, to the depository of His teaching, to the inspired document of Apostles and Prophets. The following passages from the Fathers are given in proof or explanation of this statement.

Tertullian, for instance, is well known as recommending Tradition as a means of silencing heresy in preference to Scripture. He observes that there is no end of disputing if we go to Scripture, whereas the joint testimony of the Catholic world is at once clear and unanswerable. This is true; the force of the argument from Tradition is of singular use in *hindering* controversy, but the question is, what is to be done when controversy is persisted in, and heresy spreads so widely, or is countenanced so powerfully that it cannot be put down by authority? Excommunication is doubtless the ultimate resolution of the difficulty; but meanwhile the Church, as being considerate and longsuffering with her members, allows herself to dispute and argue, and she argues from *Scripture*. She proceeds from the negative argument from Tradition, that the opinions advanced were not known before, or not allowed, to the positive refutation from Scripture. Accordingly Tertullian says in his treatise against Hermogenes, who maintained the eternity of matter: "'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' I adore the depth of Scripture, in which are manifested to me a Creator and His work. The Gospel adds the Word as the Minister and Agent of Providence; but I read not a word any where of a pre-existing matter, out of which things were made. Let the school of Hermogenes show us that it is mentioned in Scripture; if it is not in Scripture, let him

fear the woe destined for those who add or take away [1]."

Origen in like manner: "We know that Jesus Christ is God, and we seek to expound the words that are spoken, according to the dignity of the Person. Wherefore it is necessary for us to call the Holy Scriptures as witnesses; for our notions and statements without these witnesses are not trustworthy [2]."

In another place he says, "All the Scriptures, according to the Preacher, are 'words of the wise as goads and as stakes well planted, given as secret cyphers from one Shepherd;' nor is there aught superfluous in them. The Word is the One Shepherd of all things intelligent, which to those who have not ears to hear seem to disagree with one another, but in truth are most harmonious. For as the several strings of psaltery or harp, with each its own note, different (as it would seem) from the rest, make discords in the judgment of the unmusical and unscientific, because of their variety, so in like manner ears unpractised in the divine concord of Holy Scripture, set the Old Testament against the New, and the Prophets against the Law, and Gospel against Gospel, and St. Paul against Evangelist, or against himself, or against his brother Apostles. But when another comes well taught in God's har-

[1] Contr. Herm. c. 22.

[2] In Jerem. Hom. i. 7. The above is translated from the Latin; but it coincides with the Greek. Also in Matt. tom. ii.

monies, accomplished in deed and word, as a second David, 'cunning in playing,' he will bring out their perfect tones, being instructed thence to strike the strings in season, now those of the Law, now those which respond in the Gospel, now of the Prophets, now again, when fitting, of the Apostles in accordance, and so again those of the Apostles with the Evangelists. For he knows that Scripture, as a whole, is God's One Perfect and Complete Instrument, giving forth, to those who wish to learn, its one saving music from many notes combined, stilling and restraining all stirrings of the evil one, as David's music in Saul's madness." The main drift of this passage doubtless is to show the consistency of Scripture; but it also bears a clear and strong testimony to its intrinsic completeness and independence of all other sources of truth. Could Origen have so spoken, had he believed that Scripture contained only one portion of the Revelation, and that the rest was unwritten?

The light in which St. Cyprian regarded Holy Writ, is shown by his books of Testimonia, or Scripture Proofs, in which he goes through the various points of doctrine relating to the abolition of the Law, the person and office of Christ, and the discipline of the Christian Church, with a selection of texts in behalf of each of them. And the introductions to the first and third Books set before us the feeling under which he did this. The work is addressed to a friend:—

"I could not but comply, well-beloved Son, with your religious wish, most urgently imploring the divine directions, which God has vouchsafed through the Holy Scriptures for our grounding and building up; that, being rescued from the darkness of error, and illuminated by His pure and radiant light, we might, by such saving intimations, attain the way of life. . . . . The perusal of these books may serve you for the time for tracing out the first lineaments of faith. More strength will be given you, and the understanding of the heart will become more and more vigorous, the more fully you search into the Old and New Scriptures, and study one and all of the portions of those spiritual books. For in the following work I have but drawn somewhat from the divine fountains, to send to you for the season. You will be able to drink to the full and be satisfied, if you for yourself, as I have done, approach the same fountains of divine fulness to drink therefrom."

It is still more remarkable that he should bring texts in maintenance of the lesser duties and usages of Christians, which he does with the following preface:—

"As becomes your known faith and devotion towards the Lord God, dearly-beloved Son, you have asked me to instruct you by extracts from the Holy Scriptures relating to the discipline of our religion; seeking a succinct course of divine reading, that your mind, devoted to God, instead

of being wearied by long or many books, . . . might have its memory refreshed by a wholesome and complete summary."

St. Optatus, who lived in the same part of Christendom, about a century later (A.D. 360.) argues against the repetition of Baptism as follows :—

"You say it may be repeated, we say it may not; the minds of our people fluctuate between the two. Let no one trust you, or us either; we are all of us party men. Arbiters must be found; but if they be Christians, such are not fairly produceable on either side, for Truth suffers by our private prejudices. If we go out of doors for an arbiter, he must be either a pagan, and so unacquainted with our mysteries; or a Jew, who is necessarily the enemy of Christian Baptism. It follows that no human tribunal can be found for the question; we must have recourse to heaven. But why knock at heaven's gate, when we have with us a Testament in the Gospel? We may here fitly compare earthly things to heavenly. It is like the case of a man with a large family. While the father is alive, he gives his orders to each of them; a will is not yet necessary. Christ, in like manner, during His abode on earth, (may He never really be absent!) laid His commands on the Apostles, as this or that was necessary. But when a father feels himself to be dying, and fears lest after his death his sons should quarrel and go to law, he summons witnesses, and transfers his will from his heart,

which is soon to fail, to tablets which shall endure; so that, if afterwards a quarrel arise between the brothers, they have recourse, not to his tomb, but to his testament, and thus he who rests in his tomb yet speaks, though without voice, from his writing. Now He whose testament we speak of, is alive in heaven; therefore His will must be sought for, as in a testament so in the Gospel." And then he proceeds to prove the Church's view of Baptism, by the conduct and words of our Lord when He washed the disciples' feet [1].

Cyril of Jerusalem: "As regards the divine and holy Mysteries of faith, it is necessary that not even a chance word should be delivered in our tradition without the warrant of divine Scripture, to the exclusion of mere probabilities or skilfully contrived arguments. Neither give credence to my mere words, unless they are demonstrated from the Scriptures. For this is the saving principle of our faith, being derived, not from our inventions, but from proofs of Holy Scriptures [2]." What makes this passage the stronger, is, that Cyril speaks thus with reference to the Creed, which, if any statement of doctrine, might surely depend on Tradition.

St. Basil's judgment, as contained in the following passage, has been often adduced in the controversy. "It is a plain fall from the faith," he

[1] Optat. De Schism. Don. v. 3. vid. also Austin on Ps. xxi. ii. 30.

[2] Cat. iv. 17.

says, "and a sign of pride, either to annul any thing that is in Scripture, or to add what is not in Scripture, since our Lord Jesus Christ has said, 'My sheep hear My voice,' and 'the voice of strangers they know not.' . . . . And to add to the inspired Scriptures, or to detract from them is forbidden with especial earnestness by the Apostle, saying, 'Though it be but a man's Testament, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto [1].'"

Let us now proceed to St. Chrysostom, commenting on the words, "He who entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." He speaks thus: "Behold the evidences of a robber; first, that he enters not openly; next, that he enters not by the Scriptures, for this is meant by not entering in at the door. Here Christ alludes to those before Him, and to those who were to come; Antichrist, and false Christs. Judas and Theudas, and such like. He suitably calls the Scriptures the door; for they bring us to God, and open upon us the knowledge of Him. They make the sheep, guard them, and fence off the wolves. As a trusty door, Scripture shuts out heretics, securing us from error, in whatsoever we desire; and, unless we damage it, we are unassailable by our enemies. By means of it, we shall know who are pastors and who are not [2]."

[1] De Fide 1 fin. and Moral. reg. 72. c. i.

[2] In Joann. 58. ed. Duc.

St. Austin: "If any one, in matters relating to Christ, or His Church, or any other thing which belongs to faith or our life,—I will not say, if we, but even (what St. Paul has added,) 'if an angel from heaven shall preach unto you, besides what ye have received in the Scriptures of the Law and the Gospel, let him be accursed[1].'"

Again, speaking to the Donatists, he asks, "Why add ye to God's Testament by saying, that Christ is heir of no lands, but where He has Donatus for co-heir? We are not jealous. Read this to us out of the Law, out of the Prophets, out of the Psalms, out of the Gospel itself, or out of the letters of the Apostles, read it thence, and we believe it[2]."

Anastatius of Antioch, speaking of the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, says: "It is manifest that those things are not to be inquired into, which Scripture has passed over in silence. For the Holy Spirit has dispensed and administered to us all things which conduce to our profit[3]."

In our controversy with the Romanists, we do not need to bring early authorities; indeed, the later is the date of the evidence, the stronger is our case against them. With this view I quote John

[1] Contr. Lit. Petilian. iii. 7. The Romanists in answer translate præterquam *against*, as if it were præter.

[2] Contr. Donatist. Ep. (De Unitate Eccl.) 11.

[3] Anagog. Contemp. in Hexem. lib. 8. init.

of Damascus, (A.D. 730) whose exact and learned orthodoxy on the great points of faith is sullied by his defence of Image-worship. In the beginning of his work on the Orthodox Faith, he says: "God has not abandoned us in our complicated ignorance of Himself; nay, He has implanted in all men, by nature, the knowledge that there is a God. . . . . Moreover He has directly revealed to us a knowledge of Himself, as far as our weak nature can bear it, first by the Law and the Prophets, then also by His Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ. All things, therefore, which are delivered to us by the Law and the Prophets, the Apostles and Evangelists, we receive and acknowledge, and reverence; but we seek for nothing beyond them. For in that God is good, He is the Giver of all good; He has neither jealousy nor other passion . . . . Whatever is profitable for us, that He has revealed: whatever were too great to bear, that He has buried in silence. These things, then, [which are given] let us, on our part, make much of, in these let us rest; neither over-passing the lines marked out by His Eternal Will, nor in any respect transgressing the divine message[1]." In the next chapter, he closes a reflection upon the most sacred doctrines of the faith thus: "It cannot be that we should preach, or at all know, any thing about God, besides what the holy oracles of the

[1] Chap. i. ii.

Old and New Testaments have set forth, said, or manifested to us."

These extracts, strong as they are in themselves, give but a faint impression of the distinct and familiar apprehension of this great principle, in the minds of the Fathers, as evinced by their writings. It is not in one or two formal enunciations, but in the spirit, the drift, the concealed assumption of their arguments, that we discern this fundamental doctrine of the Anglican Church. It is by tracing the course of a controversy, and observing how habitually present it was to the reasonings of all the contending parties, how it guided the deliberations and decisions of Councils, how it is incidentally brought out into words, that we realize to ourselves the strength of our position. This cannot be adequately conveyed to the mind by a mere representation that it is so, or by mere extracts, yet one or two more may be of service in illustrating what only the reading of the originals in course can suitably impress on the mind.

Vincentius is commonly and rightly adduced as the champion of Tradition. He is certainly a remarkable witness of the sense of the Church in his day, that Private Judgment was not to be tolerated in the great matters of faith, which were as clearly determined, as much parts of the foundation of Christianity, as the Scriptures themselves, or their canonicity. He maintains that individuals must yield to the voice of the Church Catholic.

But let it be observed after all, what kind of Tradition he is upholding; an independent witness of Christian Truth? far from it, merely and solely an *interpretative* Tradition, a Tradition interpretative of Scripture in the great articles of faith. Thus the very treatise, which is so destructive to mere Protestantism, is as fatal to the claims of Romanism. Not only is all mention of the Pope omitted as the judge of controversies, but all mention of Tradition, except as subordinate to Holy Scripture. The opening of his work will set this clearly before us:—

"I have made frequent inquiries," he says, "and that with much earnestness and anxiety, of a great number of holy and learned men, for some definite and general rule for discriminating the truth of the Catholic faith, from the falsity of heretical pravity; and have always got an answer such as this, I may say, from all . . . . to fortify my faith in two ways . . . . first, by the authority of the Divine Law, next, by the Tradition of the Catholic Church. Here some one may ask, Since the Canon of the Scriptures is perfect, and sufficient, and more than sufficient in itself for all purposes, what is the need of joining to it the authority of the ecclesiastical sense? I answer, because the depth of Holy Scripture is such, that all do not take it in one and the same sense, but its statements are interpreted variously by various persons, so that as many senses seem deducible from it, as there are men to read it . . . .

On this account it is very necessary, such complicated and various error abounding, to regulate the interpretation of Prophets and Apostles by the standard of the Ecclesiastical and Catholic sense [1]."

Now, on the former part of this extract I make this remark; Tradition, we know, is prior to Scripture in order of time, both historically and in its application to individuals [2]. Romanists indeed rest its claims in no slight degree on this very circumstance. "Jesus Christ," says Bossuet [3], "having laid the foundation of His Church by preaching, the unwritten word was consequently the first rule of Christianity; and when the writings of the New Testament were added to it, its authority was not forfeited on that account." This being the case, it is very remarkable that Vincentius should put the written word first, and Tradition second. Had not Scripture been first in dignity and consideration, he necessarily would have made prior mention of the unwritten word. There is no other way of accounting for his saying, "*first* the authority of the Divine Law, *next* the Tradition of the Church Catholic." What follows makes this abundantly clear. The very *need* of Tradition arises only from the obscurity of Scripture, and is terminated with the interpretation of it. Vincentius assumes as undeniable, the very doctrine rejected by the Romanists, the sovereign

[1] Commonit. 1. and 2. [2] Laud, xvi. 32. p. 101.
[3] Expos. ch. xvii.

and sole authority of Scripture in matters of faith, nor has a thought of any other question but the further one, how it is to be interpreted. His submission even to Catholic Tradition, is simply and merely as it subserves the due explanation of Scripture.

Vincentius's treatise was occasioned by the Nestorian controversy. I will now review some of the documents of the Apollinarian, in which the same principle of verifying doctrine by Scripture is firmly and uniformly kept in view.

Athanasius, in the following passage, distinguishes between Tradition as *teaching*, and Scripture as *proving*, *verifying* doctrine. "Our faith is correct, and is *derived* from Apostolical teaching and the Tradition of the Fathers, *being established* out of the New and Old Testaments[1]." The same contrast between Scripture and Tradition, is observed by Cyril of Jerusalem. For instance, he says just before the passage already quoted from him, after reciting and commenting on the Creed, "Keep in thy mind alway *this seal of faith*, which I have now summarily stated in its chief articles. But if the Lord permit, I will speak of them according to my power *with proofs from Scripture*." And shortly after, "Learn and hold fast thy faith in what is taught and promised; that faith which alone is now *delivered* to thee *by Traditions of the Church* and

[1] Ad Adelph. § 6.

established from Scripture. But, since not all have ability to read the Scriptures, but are hindered from knowing them, whether by want of education or of leisure, we comprehend in a few articles the whole doctrine of faith, lest souls perish from want of instruction [1]." To return to Athanasius:—

In the following passage, that great authority recommends the very course, as a mode of acting familiar to him, which has been already described as the Church's usual procedure towards innovators; viz. first to silence them by her own authority and the received Tradition; but if matters became worse and a controversy ensued, then to have recourse to Scripture as a sure confirmation of the Catholic doctrine. He has been recounting the Apollinarian tenets, and then chides the Bishop, to whom he writes for not having silenced them at once. "For my part," he says, "I was astonished that your holiness endured such impieties; and did not silence the authors of them with the reverent Faith of the Church; that in this way matters might be brought to an issue, either submission leading to peace, or resistance to excommunication.... However, perhaps it is necessary formally to prove and expose their extravagance; yet it were well, if possible, to stop here, and say not a word more. For doctrines which are unsound, as these are on the very face of them, ought not to be discussed

[1] iv. 12, v. 7.

and made much of, lest disputatious men should take it as a proof that there is no clear case against them. They ought to receive this answer and nothing beyond, 'It is enough that these are not the doctrines of the Church nor of the Fathers.' However, lest these devisers of evil should be emboldened by our continued silence, it may be well to bring to memory a few things from the Holy Scriptures, since this may shame them perhaps from pursuing their unseemly theories[1]."

Again: "Either then deny the Holy Scriptures, or, if you acknowledge them, do not indulge speculations beyond what is written, which will do irreparable mischief[2]." Now, this is one of those passages, which, taken by itself, would stand for little; for it might easily be said, that it merely asserts that Scripture is of authority, not that Tradition is not. But when we find this appeal to Scripture repeated again and again in various shapes, and no similar appeal to Tradition, the argument for Scripture being the record of saving faith, becomes a strong one.

For this reason, I add the following passages from the same treatise; "If then ye be disciples of the Gospels, speak not iniquity against God, but walk by what is written and done. But if ye desire to speak other things beyond what is written, why do you contend with us, who are determined

[1] Ad Epict. 3. [2] Contr. Apoll. i. 6.

neither to hear nor to speak beyond what is written, the Lord having said, 'If ye abide in My word, ye shall be truly free[1].'"

"What inconceivable abandonment of mind is this, which leads you to speak what is not in Scripture, and to entertain thoughts foreign to godliness?"

"While then we confess that Christ is God and man, we do not speak this as if to imply separation in His nature, (God forbid) but, again, according to the Scriptures."

He concludes with these words, in which the same distinction is made, as has already been pointed out, between the Tradition of the Church, as an antecedent argument, a fair plea, ordinarily superseding inquiry, and, on the other hand, when for one reason or another the inquiry has proceeded, Scripture as the only basis of sound argument and conclusion. "I have written the above, beloved, though really it was unnecessary, for the Evangelical Tradition is sufficient by itself; but since you asked concerning our faith, and because of those who are desirous of trifling with their theories, and do not consider that he who speaks out of his private judgment speaks a lie. For neither the comeliness nor the glory of the Lord's human body can be adequately expressed by the wit of man; but we speak so far as we are able, viz. confess what

[1] Contr. Apollin. i. 8. fin.

has been done, as it is in Scripture, and to worship the true and living God, for the glory and acknowledgment of His love towards man[1]," &c.

Again, in his second book against Apollinarius: "Whence you gained your notion," that the soul is of a fleshly nature, "I cannot understand; it is neither proved from the Holy Scriptures, nor is it according to the received opinion of the world[2]."

I conclude with referring to Theodoret's mode of conducting the same or a similar controversy. In each of the three argumentative Dialogues, of which his Eranistes is composed, we find the following significant arrangement, in accordance with Vincentius's direction already commented on;—the arguments from Scripture come first, and then passages from the Fathers in illustration. Moreover in his first Dialogue, he introduces his authorities from the Fathers in the following way. Eranistes, the heterodox disputant, after hearing his proofs from Scripture, says; "You have expounded this text well; but I would fain learn how the ancient Doctors of the Church understood it." Orthodox replies; "You ought to have been satisfied with these proofs from the Apostles and Prophets. However, since you desire besides to know the expositions of the Holy Fathers, I will give you this aid also, with God's blessing." As if he said, it is not

[1] Ibid. 9. 11. 22, fin.

[2] Ibid. ii. 8. Vide also passages in 9. 13. 14. 17. 18. and 19.

now the place for bringing mere authority; I am *proving* the doctrine. Authority is well in its place, viz., before the controversy; but now our business is with Scripture.

Again, in his second Dialogue: "We will endeavour to persuade Arius to confess the one substance of the Holy Trinity, and we will bring the proofs of this from Holy Scripture."

And again; "How can a man dispute with those who deny our Lord has taken flesh, or human soul, or mind, except by adducing his proofs from divine Scripture? how refute the frenzied men who study to disparage the Divinity of the Only-begotten, except by showing that Divine Scripture has spoken some things with reference to His Divine, other things with reference to His human Nature[1]?"

Out of the third Dialogue I select the following. After Orthodox has stated the Catholic doctrine of the Passion and Resurrection, Eranistes answers; "The doctrines of the Church should be set forth, not in declaration merely, but by proof. Show me, then, that Holy Scripture teaches this." Upon which Orthodox proceeds to cite the Epistle to the Romans.

Again: "*Eranistes.*—St. Peter says, 'Christ having suffered for us in the flesh.' *Orthodox.*—Surely this is quite agreeable to our doctrine; for we

[1] Pp. 43. 78. Vid. also pp. 79 and 97.

have learned our Canon of doctrines from Holy Scripture."

One more passage shall be cited. "To add any thing to the words of Scripture is madness and audacity; but to open the Sacred Text, and to develope its hidden sense, is holy and religious." Here is the doctrine of the Gallic Vincentius in the mouth of a Syrian Bishop [1].

Nothing, I think, is plainer from these extracts, than that the authors of them looked upon Scripture as the standard of proof, the tribunal of appeal, in controversy. Now how strikingly coincident with this view are the words of our Articles? "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, *so that*" (*i. e.* in such sense that) "whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be *proved* thereby, is not to be *required* of any man." The Article is altogether of a polemical character.

[1] Page 224.

LECTURE XIV.

ON THE FORTUNES OF THE CHURCH.

And now, that our discussions on what may fitly be called the Prophetical Office of the Church draw to a close, the thought, with which we entered on the subject is apt to recur, when the excitement of the inquiry has subsided, and weariness has succeeded, that what has been said is but a dream, the wanton exercise, rather than the practical conclusions of the intellect. Such is the feeling of minds unversed in the disappointments of the world, incredulous how much it has of promise, how little of substance; what intricacy and confusion beset the most certain truths; how much must be taken on trust, in order to be possessed; how little can be realized except by an effort of the will; how great a part of enjoyment lies in resignation. Without some portion of that Divine Philosophy which bids us consider "the kingdom of God" to be "within us," and which, by prayer and meditation, by acting on

what is told us, and by anticipating sight, develops outwardly its own views and principles, and thus assimilates to itself all that is around us, not only the Church in this age and country, but the Church Catholic any where, or at any time, Primitive, Roman, or Reformed, is but a name, used indeed as the incentive to actions, but without local habitation, or visible tokens, "here or there," "in the secret chambers," or "in the desert." After all, the Church is invisible in its day, and faith only apprehends it.

Under this feeling I proceed, lastly, to consider more attentively this main difficulty in the Anglican system; and in so doing shall have opportunity to justify, by examples, the doctrine which has just been suggested by way of reconciling the mind to it.

The most plausible objection, then, urged by the Romanists against the English Church, is, that we are what they call a Parliamentary Church, a State Creation or Establishment, depending on the breath of princes or of populace, and directed towards mere political ends, such as the temporal well-being of the community, or the stability of the Constitution; whereas the True Church is built upon the one Faith, transmitted through successive generations, and simply maintains what it has so received, leaving temporal benefits to come and go, to follow or be suspended, as the case may be. The argument comes with the greater force, because

Protestants have not unfrequently granted the fact, and only denied its importance. Yet we need not fear to contest the fact itself in spite of both Romanists and the Protestants in question; and in order to show how little it can be maintained, I will take pains to state it as strongly as I can, before I proceed to reply to it.

It is objected, then, that the Church is by office, and in her very definition, "the pillar and ground of the Truth," that "God's Spirit which is upon her, and His words which He has put in her mouth, shall not depart out of her mouth, nor out of the mouth of her seed, nor out of the mouth of her seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever;" that "*all* her children are taught of the Lord, and great is the peace of her children." In such texts the Faith committed to the Church is represented, not as a secret and difficult doctrine, but as clearly proclaimed, indefectibly maintained, and universally acknowledged. Whatever errors and corruptions there may be in the Church and her children, so far, it may be argued, is clear, that the true Faith, the one way to heaven, the one message from the Saviour of sinners, the Revelation of the Gospel, will be plain and unequivocal, as the sun in the heavens, from first to last; so that whoever goes wrong within her pale, will have himself to blame wholly, not his defective light. In the English Church, however, we shall hardly find ten or twenty neighbouring clergymen who agree together; and

that, not in the non-essentials of religion, but as to what are its elementary and necessary doctrines; or as to the fact whether there are any necessary doctrines at all, any distinct and definite faith required for salvation. Much less do the laity receive that instruction in one and the same doctrine, which is the evidence, as may be fairly alleged, of their being "taught of the Lord." They wander about like sheep without a shepherd, they do not know what to believe, and are thrown on their own private judgment, weak and inadequate as it is, merely because they do not know whither to betake themselves for guidance. If they go to one Church they hear one doctrine, in the next that comes, they hear another; if they try to unite the two, they are obliged to drop important elements in each, and waste down and attenuate the Faith to a mere shadow; if they shrink, as they may naturally do, from both the one doctrine and the other, they are taught to be critical, sceptical, and self-wise; and all this is sure to lead them to heterodoxy in one form or other, over and above the evil whether of arrogance or indifference in themselves. If, again, they are blessed with teachable and gentle minds, such uncertainty makes them desponding and unhappy; they walk in darkness, and disquiet, far removed from that "peace" which the Prophet describes as resulting from the "teaching" which the children of the True Church receive.

Further, it may be urged, that, over and above the variations existing in the Creed of our Church, we are not even agreed among ourselves whether there be any Church at all, that is, One True Church, commissioned and blest by Christ; that many of our Clergy openly avow their disbelief of it, and without censure from our Bishops; and that our national schools, in which we profess to educate the mass of the populace, commonly teach nothing definitely and strictly about it, but are content for the most part with providing that vague kind of religious knowledge which might be learned as well among Dissenters; that, while we instil into the minds of children some sufficient horror of Popery, we give them no preservative against the Wesleyans, Baptists, or Independents. It may be further objected, that we are in a state of actual warfare with each other, not only differing, but considering our mutual differences perilous or even damnable; that we have no internal bond of union, but are kept together by the State, which by a wholesome tyranny forces us to be friends with each other. And further still, much intemperate declamation may be indulged about our system of patronage in the Church, the mode in which our Bishops are appointed, their being corrupted by their intercourse with laymen in Parliament, and the like topics. Specific instances of scandal may be added; that Hoadley, for instance, in the last century, though a Socinian, as is now acknowledged by high autho-

rity in Church matters, was allowed to remain for nearly fifty years a Bishop in possession; and that when in the early part of his career, the Clergy in Convocation, the legitimate ministers of the Faith, attempted to censure some of his errors, they were hindered by the civil power, which suspended the Convocation forthwith, and has never allowed it since to resume its functions. Or again, notice may be directed to the existing carelessness in many places about the due administration of Baptism, no sufficient regard being had to the persons administering, the mode of performing it, nay, or the very rite itself.

All this has been said, and in an exaggerated tone; certainly exaggerated, for after all the Prayer Book is a practical guide into the sense of Scripture for all teachable minds; and those of our Divines, whom "all the people account as prophets," with whatever differences of opinion in minor points, yet on the whole teach in essentials one and all the same doctrine. For instance, the most popular books in our Church, and the most highly sanctioned for the last 100 or 200 years, have been, I suppose, such as Bishop Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, the Whole Duty of Man, Hammond's Catechism, or Bishop Wilson's Sermons; and do not these sufficiently agree together in doctrine to edify all who ask what the Faith of Christ is? Surely then there is much exaggeration in such statements as the foregoing. But whether exaggeration or not,

it matters little; were every word of them literally true, yet they would not tend to invalidate the claim of the English Church to be considered a branch of the One Church Catholic.

The parallel of the Jewish Church will afford us a sufficient answer to all that has been objected. I need scarcely observe that the Israelites were especially raised up to be witnesses for the One True God against idolatry, and had the doctrine of the Divine Unity set before them, with an injunction upon the fathers ever to teach the children, and that they remained God's peculiar people till Christ came; and yet, as every one knows, there were even long periods in their history during which the whole nation was sunk in idolatry or lingered on in decay, captivity, or dispersion. Even then were the English Church, as a Church, to go further than she is ever alleged to have gone, in denying her own powers, were she to put herself on a level with the sectaries round about her, and to consider Ordination as a mere human ceremony, it would not follow that she had lost her gift. That they who do not claim the One Church Catholic as theirs, possess it not, however specious an argument, cannot really be maintained. Of course there are cases in which a Church incurs more or less of punishment for neglect of its privileges, but even then its state is not the same as if they had never been given; generally speaking, they are but suspended or impaired, not forfeited. Even Sam-

son, after losing his hair upon the lap of Delilah, recovered his strength in his captivity, when his hair grew again. If we have been made God's children, we cannot unmake ourselves; we can never be mere natural men again. There is but the alternative of our being His children still, though erring ones, and under rebuke, or apostates and devils; and surely there is enough on the very face of our Church, as we humbly trust, and as our most bigotted opponents must grant, to show that we are not reprobates, but that, amid whatever scandals, we have faith and love abiding with us. This is to take far lower ground than we think we may fairly take in comparison of Rome; yet it is well to see what the objection under review amounts to at the utmost. Whether or not there are cases in which a branch of the Church, as an individual Christian, may utterly exhaust itself of grace and become reprobate, St. Paul expresses the rule of God's dealings with us in his Epistle to the Romans; "the gifts and calling of God are *without repentance*." If the Israelites sinned, they were not to be abandoned; on the contrary, it is declared, "then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; *nevertheless, My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail;* My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips[1]." Or

[1] Psalm lxxxix. 32—34.

again, in the well-known passage of the prophet, God says to the Jews, "That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you..... And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant[1]." The same is the lesson of the New Testament, as in the parable of the talents, in which the servant who hid his Lord's talent did not at once forfeit it, did not release himself of the responsibility of having it; he had it by to produce, though unused, at the last day[2]. Still more impressive, because more directly in point, are St. Paul's words concerning his own commission: "Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel. For, if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, *a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me*[3]." If we disbelieve or neglect our gifts, they remain with us, though as a burden and as a witness at the last day. We do not become a mere creation of man, though we sell ourselves to be his slave.

And, if not even a denial of her gifts on the part of a Church, necessarily leads to their absolute

[1] Ezek. xx. 32—37. [2] Matt. xxv. 25. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17.

forfeiture, much less will the disbelief of certain of her ministers incur that penalty. From their own souls, indeed, the grace of her ordinances will be shut; but though they trample on their invisible powers, yet are they unconsciously the instruments of transmitting them onwards and of imparting their blessed effects to those who believe. They do what they know not; holy Isaac blessed Jacob for Esau, and could not reverse it. The old prophet of Bethel was the involuntary instrument of God's wrath, condemning himself the while. Balaam, with a covetous heart and amid heathen enchantments, announced Christ's coming. Caiaphas, the high priest, while contriving his Lord's death, prophesied, *because* he was high priest, yet did not know that he prophesied. The words of St. John should be carefully studied: "One of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad [1]." The language of Caiaphas then had quite a different sense from what he intended, and far higher. He

[1] John xi. 49—52.

spoke of the Jewish nation under the word "people," but it was the Holy Ghost's word in his mouth to denote the elect children of God wherever found all over the earth; and he meant to speak of Christ's death as removing the perplexities which His miracles caused to himself and his party, but he really spoke of the Atoning Sacrifice which He made shortly after for the sins of the whole world. In like manner, even though a Bishop were to use the words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," with little or no meaning, or a Priest the consecrating words in the Eucharist, considering it only a commemoration of Christ's death, or a Deacon the water and the words in Baptism, denying in his heart that it is regeneration; yet they may, in spite of their unbelief, be instruments of a power they know not of; and "speak not of themselves;" they may be as Balaam or as Isaac.

The state of the later Jewish Church, of which Caiaphas affords one instance, illustrates most strikingly how dangerous it is to go by sight in religious matters instead of consulting God's word. How deeply was the divine building "daubed with the untempered mortar" of secular politics! how closely did it simulate a mere civil establishment, till the day of vengeance came, and God claimed His fugitive Prophet, who had hid himself amid the empires of this world! What anomalies in the present state of the Church can parallel those which were committed among the Jews? What infraction, for

instance, of the law of Moses could be greater than that the high priesthood should be taken away from the hereditary line, held but for a time, and associated with the profession of arms or with royalty? Yet such were its fortunes in the family of the Asmonæans, who, besides their unpriestly character, were many of them stained with crimes which gave deeper shade to the irregularity. Aristobulus, son of Hyrcanus, starved to death his mother, caused one brother to be assassinated, and imprisoned the rest, and then died of remorse. Alexander, on occasion of a mutiny, massacred six thousand of the Jewish populace; and, at another, had eight hundred crucified before his eyes at an entertainment he gave in honour of his wives and concubines. Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, his sons, carried on civil war against each other. Herod, a man of Edom, was allowed to fill the throne of David; and, stained as he was with the most heinous crimes, he appointed three or four high priests in succession, and rebuilt the temple of God. Yet, in spite of all these enormities, "the seat of Moses," the oil of the priesthood, and the miraculous governance of the nation, remained, not fading away without memorial, but for a while latent and quiescent, then fearfully showing themselves in the utter destruction of the race which had profaned its own gifts. But, till that final destruction the gifts continued, and were profitable to those who cared to use them religiously.

Earlier periods in Jewish history may next be specified; for though in these the irregularities themselves might be less, yet the presence of a supernatural Providence, however latent, is further removed from doubt or cavil.

What a remarkable picture does the Book of Judges present to us! Suppose it was lost to us, and we were to read Numbers and Joshua, and then turn to the reign of David, could we have conceived the actual state of the nation between the former and the latter period? Had we been bidden to describe it by conjecture, to connect together the two by some probable medium, should we have guessed by a stretch of fancy that the newly-created fabric of Judaism had been destined so soon to fall to pieces, or rather was to fade away like a dream, unrealized and unattempted for a space of three or four hundred years after the giving of the Law? Moses and Joshua set in motion a system which suddenly stops with the human originators of it. What must have been the feelings of a thoughtful Israelite during those centuries of confusion, when every one did what was right in his own eyes, and the lawless were kept in order as much by the yoke of the invader and oppressor as by the divinely-ordered sway of the Judges? what would have been his arguments against the cavils of Philistine or Midianite, who thought it worth while to examine the pretensions of his Law? Would they not treat those pretensions with utter scorn and derision,

as fantastic and extravagant, as idle, foolish, and irrational, as the world now deems our Apostolical Descent? What evidence, indeed, could the Israelites give of a supernatural presence among them? There were men who lived and died in the holy land, without sign or token, as far as we are told, of the Lord God of Israel, except such as a lively faith detects and appropriates. The Philistines at one time were masters of the chosen people for forty years, the Moabites for eighteen, the Canaanites for twenty, the Ammonites for eighteen. And such greater disturbances of the Mosaic covenant were but centres and origins of the extended distress and confusion in which religion lay during those early times. Its champions, too, had sometimes almost as little in them to refresh the eye of purity and truth as its enemies. The history of Samson and Jephtha presented as great perplexities to faith, as Jabin, king of Canaan, or Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia. Or, consider the fortunes of Gideon's family; Abimelech, the son of his concubine, massacreing all his brethren, to the number of threescore and ten persons save one, and making himself king; his townsmen, by whose aid he seized the sovereignty, revolting from him, and then defeated and destroyed by him; then he himself cut off in battle. Or, consider the history of the tribe of Benjamin, its victories over the other tribes, then its overthrow with the loss of twenty-five thousand men in one day. Or again,

(what is portentous,) the worship of a graven image set up by certain Danites on their original settlement in the promised land, with the regular succession of a priesthood, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh, as if Satan were from the first to share the holy land with the Lord God of Hosts. Such are some of the irregularities and disorders which Almighty Wisdom does not find inconsistent with the continuous and progressive fulfilment of its purposes; such the valleys and pits in the wilderness which intervene between the great providences of God, and are lost to us while we contemplate the majestic summits of Moriah, Pisgah, or Zion, and the beacon lights thereon kindled. And if a supernatural presence was with the Israelites all along their years of crime and captivity, who shall presume to say, that we, whatever be our misfortunes and our sins, have certainly forfeited the Gospel promises, or that a true faith cannot elicit from our ordinances and appropriate in its fulness those benefits which Christ originally lodged in them? who shall curse whom God has not cursed, drying up our Baptism, or tainting the manna of our Eucharist, making our Priests speechless, or breaking the staff of our Rulers? Who can excommunicate those who have ever held to that Creed, and that Succession, and those Ordinances which Apostles bequeathed them? Let Romanists see to it, whether, instead of attempting anything against us, it is not rather their wisdom to shelter

their own Church under the foregoing arguments from the far more serious charges to which it is exposed.

Two other periods occur in the history of Israel, which deserve attention. In their captivity in Egypt, they seem almost to have forgotten that any promise had been made to their race; and when Moses reminded them of it, they "hearkened not unto him for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage." Again, much might be said concerning their captivity in Babylon, when "their king and their princes were among the Gentiles, the Law was no more, and their prophets found no vision from the Lord[1]." And again, a fresh field of remark is afforded by the great schism of the ten tribes under Jeroboam and the ministry of Elijah and Elisha among them.

Setting, then, our present disorders at the very highest, making the largest admissions on that score which Romanists can demand, not denying for argument's sake, that our Bishops have before now done despite to their own Apostolical powers, that our Teachers have been at variance with each other, that aliens and enemies have usurped our rights, that the laity has been almost sanctioned by their pastors in loose and irreverent views and practices, and that the very notion of the Church Catholic has died away from the popular mind,

[1] Lam. ii. 9.

granting, that is, what is a great deal more than the truth, it will not follow that Almighty God may not be as truly and supernaturally with us as He was with His former people, when the Angel appeared to Gideon during the Midianitish captivity, or to Zechariah in the days of Herod. And if truly with us, then, doubtless, in a far higher and more miraculous way, by how much the Christian Church has more of heaven in it than had the Polity of Israel.

One more remark shall be suggested. Is it not very strange and very significant, that our Lord and Saviour, the immaculate Lamb of God, should be descended not only from virtuous Ruth the Moabitess, but from incestuous Tamar?

Such is the light which the Jewish history throws upon our present circumstances, taken at the worst, but Christian times afford us a second parallel to them. The Romanist must admit that the state, whether of the Church Catholic or of the Roman Church, at periods before and during the middle ages, was such, as to bear a very strong resemblance to the picture he draws of our own. I do not speak of corruptions in life and morals merely, or the errors of individuals, however highly exalted, but of the general disorganized and schismatical state of the Church, her practical abandonment of her spiritual pretensions, the tyranny exercised over her by the civil power, and the intimate adherence of the worst passions, and of circumstantial irregu-

larities to those acts which are vital portions of her system.

For instance, the especial stain, which is imputed to our own Church, is this; that in A.D. 1560, Elizabeth, on succeeding to the throne, deprived, by Act of Parliament, all its existing Bishops but one, for refusing to become Protestants, and introduced a new succession, by means of Parker, who was consecrated under her special license to the Archbishoprick of Canterbury, by certain Bishops, either not in possession of Sees, or only Suffragans. No one denies this was a violent proceeding, though unavoidable under her peculiar circumstances; but it is one thing to be violent in accidentals and adjuncts, another to be invalid in essentials. The question is simply whether Parker was formally consecrated by those who had the power of consecrating. God may carry on His work amid human sin, granting, for argument's sake, that it was such; as the incest of Judah was, as I have observed, in the line of our Lord's genealogy. This is to view the matter at the extremest point of disadvantage at which the Romanist can place it. Now let us see whether former times do not supply instances of similar scandals [1].

The third General Council was held A.D. 431, on occasion of the Nestorian heresy, and passed decrees concerning our Lord's Person, as divine and

[1] Vid. Bramhall, Works, pp. 40. 153, 154.

human, which the English Church as well as the Roman, has ever recognized as true and necessary. Now under what circumstances were these decrees framed? Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, was charged, and rightly charged, by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, with heresy. Antioch, and the rest of the East, remained neuter; Rome, and the West, took part with Cyril. Celestine, Bishop of Rome, held a Latin Council, condemned Nestorius, degraded him on the event of his contumacy, and committed the execution of this sentence to Cyril. The Emperor of the day interposed, and summoned at Ephesus, the General Council in question. Cyril and Nestorius, with their respective partizans, arrived at Ephesus, at the time appointed, before John, Bishop of Antioch, and the Orientals. After a delay of a fortnight, Cyril opened the Council, as President, without them, in spite of the earnest representations of the Imperial Officer, who intreated him to allow a further delay. Its proceedings thus unsatisfactorily commenced, were concluded within the space of a single day. Five days afterward the Orientals arrived, and, angry at the slight put upon them, they held a Council by themselves, and degraded Cyril, and Memnon, the Bishop of Ephesus, who had sided with him. Memnon, being powerful in his own city, shut the Churches against them, and stationed a guard in the Cathedral, which, on the advance of the Imperial troops against it, vigorously repulsed and

routed them. After a riot of three months' continuance, the hostile parties retired to their respective homes; and at the end of several years John and Cyril, making mutual admissions and explanations in points of doctrine, were reconciled to each other, and jointly assented to the condemnation of Nestorius. From that time Nestorius has been accounted a heretic by the Church. Transactions such as these are a proof that, in the Roman system at least, while adherence is paid to the positive observances enjoined us, the sins of individuals taking part in their execution, do not interfere with their validity. That at that time with whatever incidental dissension and delay, the testimony of the Catholic world was at length collected on the subject of dispute, and that that testimony really condemned Nestorius; and further that it was but a repetition of the testimony afforded by Catholic Fathers from the first, is sufficiently clear to all students in theology. But, anyhow, the scandals of the Council of Ephesus are an effectual obstacle to any over-delicate and fastidious criticisms of Romanists upon our Reformation.

The history of Vigilius, Bishop of Rome, in the following century, presents the Romanist with a similar difficulty. It is well known that according to the Roman system, a General Council is not of authority unless confirmed by the Pope; now the fifth Council was confirmed by this Vigilius, who,

unless positive observances, not moral qualifications, be the conditions on our part, of supernatural agency, neither confirmed the Council, nor was Pope at all. His career was as follows.—The last Bishop of Rome had died at Constantinople, after deposing the Bishop of that city for heresy; Vigilius, who was at that time a deacon, had accompanied him thither, and made offers to the Empress Theodora, who had adopted the same heresy, to acknowledge and support the deposed Bishop, if she assisted himself to rise to the See of St. Peter. Having gained the Empress, he proceeded into Italy, to Belisarius, whom he also gained through the interest which she exerted in his favour, and by promising two hundred pieces of gold, from himself, should he obtain the appointment. Meanwhile Silverius had been chosen at Rome to fill the vacant See. On suspicion of corresponding with the Goths, he was summoned before Belisarius, stripped of his sacerdotal habit, and banished to Lycia. Vigilius was appointed in his room, and his first act was to refuse to discharge his own engagements in the contract; neither siding with the heretics, nor paying the promised bribe. The latter condition he at length fulfilled on being put into possession of his rival, Silverius, whom he sent to Pandataria, where death by famine put an end to his sufferings. The fifth General Council being afterwards held at Constantinople, he refused to assent to its decrees, and was, in consequence, banished

by Justinian; nor was he allowed to return to Rome, till he recanted, formally confirmed them, and thereby secured, as the Romanists consider, their infallibility. Unless formal acts are the secret threads by which the line of Divine Providence is continued, how can Romanists hold either that Vigilius was Pope, or that he confirmed the decrees of the fifth General Council? Thus they accord to us a principle which brings us safely through our own misfortunes, though they apply it to instances in which we consider it is not pertinent.

Let us now take an instance some hundred years later. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the rank and wealth of the higher ecclesiastics was such as to absorb those higher spiritual functions which had led to their obtaining them. The Bishops were temporal princes, were appointed irrespectively of their religious fitness, and felt more closely bound to the feudal lord of whom they held their temporalities, than to the Church. "They were obtruded in their Sees," says a recent writer, "as the Supreme Pontiffs were upon that of Rome, by force or corruption. A child of five years old was made Archbishop of Rheims. The See of Narbonne was purchased for another at the age of ten." He adds, "It was almost general in the Church to have Bishops under twenty years old." Again; "Either through bribery in places where elections still prevailed, or through corrupt agreements with princes, or at least customary presents

to their wives and ministers, a large proportion of the Bishops had no valid tenure in their sees. The case was perhaps worse with inferior clerks; in the Church of Milan, which was notorious for this corruption, not a single ecclesiastic could stand the test, the Archbishop exacting a price for the collation of every benefice [1]."

Such being the general state of the Church, Rome itself was the scene of contest between rival claimants of the Holy See, the respective champions of the imperial prerogatives and ecclesiastical liberty. In 1012, Benedict VIII. was forced by the Anti-pope, Gregory V., to fly to the Emperor Henry II., who reinstated him. Benedict IX., a man of abandoned life, being degraded by the Romans, was restored by the Emperor Conrad, and, running into still greater excesses, was again deposed by his people, who chose in his place Sylvester III. A third time he was reinstated, by the arms of his adherents; and at length, despairing of appeasing the resentment of the Romans, he sold his holy office to the arch-presbyter of Rome, who succeeded under the name of Gregory VI. While the Roman see thus lay between the pretensions of three competitors, the Emperor, Henry III., deposed them all, and introduced a fourth, under the name of Clement II. This is

[1] Hallam's Middle Ages, chap. vii. Vid. passages quoted in Tillotson's Rule of Faith, iii. 7.

but one specimen of ecclesiastical irregularities, greater, surely, than any which have occurred among ourselves, whether in the reigns of the Tudor princes, or of William III.

The great Western Schism, in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is another instance of ecclesiastical disorder, such as has not happened in our own branch of the Church. We in England think it, as it really was, a very grievous thing, that there should have been in King William's time rival Bishops in the Archiepiscopal and some other sees, the exigencies of the State calling for measures towards the Church which, in civil matters, would have been tyranny. But what prudent Romanist will object this to us, as if more than a ruffling of the surface of the deep fountains of her power, who recollects the state of his own Church during the period referred to? For fifty years the Latin Church had two or three heads at the same time, each intriguing and directing anathemas against his rivals. Mosheim remarks, that during that period, as was natural, "many plain, well-meaning people, who concluded that no one could be saved unless united to the Vicar of Christ," *i. e.* the Pope, "were overwhelmed with doubt, and plunged into the deepest distress of mind[1];" the very misfortune which is alleged *mutatis mutandis* to be the result of our own unhappy differences at present. Meanwhile the Gal-

[1] Mosheim, vol. iii. p. 328.

lican Church, seriously affected by the scandal of the contest, in a council held at Paris at the end of the fourteenth century, solemnly renounced all subjection to either of the contending parties. At the beginning of the next century the Council of Pisa deposed the rival Popes of the day, appointing a third in their place, who being unable to carry into effect their decision with a strong hand, did but become a third competitor, and form a fresh party in the schism. Doubtless to these and similar miserable disorders we owe the licentious and profane movements of the sixteenth century, of which the Romanists are so ready to complain; and the present wasted and enfeebled state of the Church, including our own branch of it. And, as during the continuance of these old dissensions, the humble and believing, as we humbly trust, enjoyed the Ordinances of grace though administered by unchristian hands, much less can their consequences, our present and past distressing circumstances, taken at the greatest, be any bar in the due administration of the Sacraments to those who believe and seek God truly.

Such was the state of things in the middle ages; let us now turn to the early Church, which apparently was not altogether free from those errors and disorders which are the scandal of modern times.

In the fourth century there were at one time three, and for a long time two, Bishops of Antioch

at once, one countenanced by the East, the other by the West; and that succession at last prevailed which had been violently introduced by the Arians. In Africa the Donatists, in the time of their power, had as many as four hundred Bishops, within sixty or seventy as many as the Catholic Church.

In the early Ante-Nicene times, the Church seemed for a while to be but one sect among many, being confused with Jews, and the various Gnostic denominations, as it is at this time in our own country, with the multitude of parties and heresies which prevail. Nay, it had peculiar difficulties of its own, distinct from those of after centuries. While it was still under persecution, with deficient union in its separate branches, private Christians had to struggle with uncertainties, and with partial knowledge,—I do not say whether more or less than ours,—but certainly such as we have not. Till the fourth century there was no unanimous reception of the Canon of the New Testament, no sufficient check upon the fancies and extravagancies of individual teachers. All the great points, indeed, of faith were thoroughly known by all, in a far higher way than is at present vouchsafed to us; but in many matters of detail, or as regards the intellectual comprehension of its terms, though there was, doubtless, one uniform doctrine handed down from the Apostles, heresy was not so immediately recognized, as it was afterwards, when the stimulus it supplied had retouched and deepened

the lineaments of the Creed. It is observable that the two most learned and gifted of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, while explicit in their report of Catholic Truth in all matters of necessary faith, yet are little trustworthy themselves, and are open in secondary points to the charge of unwarrantable speculation. There can be no instance among ourselves of sincere Christians being tempted, as Origen was, to question what is meant by the eternal punishment destined for the finally impenitent; or of a Bishop, as Dionysius, speaking of the Eternal Son, in terms which to some others conveyed a sense as far from orthodoxy as from his own meaning; or of a whole Church, as the Roman, doubting of the full authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews. All the most important points in the Christian system have been publicly canvassed in detail, and settled once for all; but in the first ages of the Church there was more room than now, not for practical uncertainty where men were teachable, but for inquiry where they were restless, and for controversy where they were stubborn.

To these instances, in earlier and later times, I will but add the testimony of two Bishops of the Church in ages and countries far removed from each other, and under circumstances widely different, in proof of this one fact, that there have been junctures in the history of the Dispensation before our own, in which contemporaries thought

they saw the utter confusion and the destruction of all that was sacred, venerable, or precious; the immediate extinction of that Truth which has lasted centuries after them. The first of these writers is St. Basil, Exarch of Cæsarea, in the fourth century; the other is an authority, whom the Romanists at least cannot reject, the famous Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury in the thirteenth. Of these the former thus writes concerning the state of Asia Minor, where the Arians had for some years been spreading their heresy:—

"Our afflictions are well known without my telling; the sound of them has gone forth over all Christendom. The opinions of the Fathers are despised; Apostolical Traditions are set at nought; the speculations of innovators hold sway in the Churches. Men have learned to be theorists instead of theologians. The wisdom of the world has the place of honour, having dispossessed the boasting of the Cross. The gravity of the sacred order has perished; there are none to feed the Lord's flock with knowledge; ambitious men are even spending, for purposes of self-indulgence and bribery, possessions which they hold in trust for the poor. The accurate observance of the Canons is no more; there is no restraint upon sin. The Laity remain unchastised; the prelates have lost all freedom of speech, for they are necessarily the slaves of those by whose patronage they have gained their dignities. . . . . Unbelievers laugh at what they

see, and the weak are unsettled; no one can tell where the true faith lies, because the adulterators of the word make plausible pretences to be true. The better sort of people keep silence; but every railer speaks what he will. Sacred things are profaned; those of the laity who are sound in faith avoid the places of worship, as schools of blasphemy, and raise their voices in solitude, with groans and tears to the God of heaven[1]."

Nine hundred years afterwards, an Archbishop of Canterbury, who at least is an authority with Romanists, writes as follows: "The king of England," he says, in a letter concerning Henry II. addressed to the Roman Cardinals, "has seized and is every day seizing the property of the Church, subverts its liberty, stretches out his hands against the anointed ones of the Lord, against the clergy, without limit of place or selection of persons, imprisoning some, beheading others, tearing out the eyes of others, forcing others to single combat, others to the ordeal, that the Bishops may not pay obedience to their Metropolitan, nor the Clergy to their Bishops, nor account themselves excommunicated when they have been duly excommunicated." In another place, he thus speaks of the corrupt practices of the Roman see: "Sacrilegious men, murderers, plunderers are absolved, impenitent men,

[1] Basil, Ep. 92. The first sentence is condensed from the original.

whom I boldly pronounce on Christ's word, though the world be against me, not even St. Peter, were he in the Roman see, could absolve in God's sight. . . . Certainly, if restitution might be made and is not, there is no true repentance. . . . Let who dare thus bind himself and not fear the sentence of the Judge to come. Let him absolve men of plunder, sacrilege, murder, perjury, blood and schism, though impenitent. . . . I will trouble the court of Rome no longer; let those apply to it who are strong in their iniquities, and after triumphing over justice and leading innocence captive, return in glory for the confusion of the Church [1]."

But in truth the whole course of Christianity from the first, when we come to examine it, is but one series of troubles and disorders. Every century is like every other, and to those who live in it seems worse than all times before it. The Church is ever ailing, and lingers on in weakness, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in her body." Religion seems ever expiring, schisms dominant, the light of Truth dim, its adherents scattered. The cause of Christ is ever in its last agony, as though it were but a question of time whether it fails finally this day or another. The Saints are ever all but failing from

[1] Ep. D. Thom. ii. 46. v. 20.

the earth, and Christ all but coming; and thus the day of judgment is literally ever at hand; and it is our duty ever to be looking out for it, not disappointed that we have so often said, "now is the moment," and that at the last, contrary to our expectation, Truth has somewhat rallied. Such is God's will, gathering in His elect, first one and then another, by little and little, in the intervals of sunshine between storm and storm, or snatching them from the surge of evil, even when the waters rage most furiously. Well may prophets cry out "How long will it be, O Lord, to the end of these wonders?" how long will this mystery proceed? how long will this perishing world be sustained by the feeble lights which struggle for existence in its unhealthy atmosphere? God alone knows the day and the hour when that will at length be which He is ever threatening; meanwhile, thus much of comfort do we gain from what has been hitherto, not to despond, not to be dismayed, not to be anxious at the troubles which encompass us. They have ever been; they ever shall be; they are our portion. "The floods are risen, the floods have lift up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly; but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier."

THE END.

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.

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NOV 08 1998

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Lectures on the Prophetical
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